



15th Biennial Conference of Nordic Association for China Studies (NACS)
NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies
14th Annual Nordic NIAS Council Conference (*VIRTUAL CONFERENCE*)
China's Rise/Asia's Responses
10-11 June 2021

<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/beta/chinas-riseasias-responses>

Thursday 10 June, 2021

The time is Finnish Helsinki Time. It is 1 hour ahead of Central European Time.

Time	Events		
10:00-10:25	Opening Julie Yu-Wen Chen (University of Helsinki): chair of conference Duncan McCargo (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies): co-operator of the conference Tiina Airaksinen (University of Helsinki): co-chair of conference		
10:25-10:55	Keynote speech by William A. Callahan, Professor of International Relations, London School of Economics <i>Visualizing China, Visualizing the World</i>		
10:55-11:25	Keynote speech by Camilla T. N. Sørensen, Associate Professor of Political Science, Royal Danish Defense College <i>Analyzing Main Drivers behind Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the (Post-)American World Order</i>		
11:30-13:00	<p>Panel 1 China's Rise and its Impact on Southeast Asia and South Asia Chair: William Callahan (LSE) Assistant: Julia Keipi</p> <p>Hedging against China: The Reactions of the Middle Powers Vietnam and the Philippines to China's Rise (Alfred Gerstl, Palacky University Olomouc)</p> <p>China's Rise in Indonesia: Xinyimin and the ethnic conflict in context of Indonesian Islamic Society (Elo Süld, University of Tartu)</p> <p>Bangladeshi Responses to China's Rise (Arild Engelsen Ruud & Mohammad AbuBakar Siddique, University of Oslo)</p> <p>An Analysis of Laotian Trust in China under the Background of China-Laos Community of Shared Future: The Ontological Security of Small-States under</p>	<p>Panel 2 Cycles, Progress, Ruptures: Conceptual Articulations of Change in Chinese Intellectual History Chair: Hilde De Weerd (Leiden University) Assistant: Ira Kolkkinen</p> <p>Evolution-Revolution-Transformation: Concepts of Change in Premodern China (Lisa Indraccolo, Tallinn University)</p> <p>From Changing Aesthetics to Aesthetics of Change: The Concept of <i>huagong</i> in Li Zhi's Literary Thought (Phillip Grimberg, Friedrich-Alexander University in Erlangen-Nuremberg)</p> <p>Rethinking Change at the Threshold of Modernity: On Gong Zizhen's Philosophy of History (Dawid Rogacz, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)</p> <p>Revolutionary Change vs Harmonious Transformation: Ai Siqi, Mao Zedong,</p>	<p>Panel 3 China's Rise and its Impact on Korea's Future Chair: Stephen Ranger (University of Turku) Assistant: Erika Kosonen</p> <p>Loosening or Tightening the Linchpin? The Effects of China's Approach to US THAAD Deployment in South Korea (Bee Yun Jo, Korea Institute for Defense Analyses)</p> <p>Roaring Currents: The Korean Film Industry amidst the Rise of China (Jimmyn Parc, Seoul National University & Sciences Po Paris)</p> <p>Analyzing the Impact of China's Rise on the Dokdo Dispute (Stephen Ranger, University of Turku)</p>

	<p>the Asymmetric Relations (Xiao FANG, Jinan University)</p> <p>China and Myanmar's Coup D'etat (Tiina Airaksinen, University of Helsinki)</p>	<p>Tang Yijie: Chinese Interpretations of Marxist Dialectics (Federico Brusadelli, University of Naples "L'Orientale")</p>	
13:00-14:00	Break		
14:00-15:25	<p>Panel 4 China in 2020 Chair: Matti Puranen (National Defense University) Assistant: Julia Keipi</p> <p>Ideological Debates in the Rectifying Foreign Place Names Campaign in China (Guowen Shang, University of Bergen)</p> <p>Graduate Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Opportunities and Challenges in China's Greater Bay Area (Dian LIU, University of Stavanger)</p> <p>China's Nation Branding in COVID-19 Pandemic: A Narrative Analysis of China's Daily Tweets on Covid-19 (Wenjia Zhou, University of Turku)</p> <p>Racism, Biopolitics and Nationalism: 'China' in the Italian and British Media Discourses during the Early Stage of the Covid-19 Pandemic (Wing-Fai LEUNG & Maria Paola POFI, King's College London)</p> <p>Infectious Extremism: The Biopolitical Repercussions for Xinjiang in the Wake of</p>	<p>Panel 5 China's Use of Economic Power and its' Manifold Backlashes Chair: Mikael Mattlin (University of Turku) Assistant: Ira Kolkkinen</p> <p>Measuring and Mapping China's Rise in Asia: Case Studies and Critical Research Alternatives (Keegan Elmer, University of Helsinki)</p> <p>Relations before Economic Gains: Insights from the Arctic Case (Liisa Kauppila, University of Turku)</p> <p>Nordic Security Rethink on Chinese Investments: Back to the Future? (Mikael Mattlin, University of Turku & Mikko Rajavuori, University of Eastern Finland)</p> <p>Authoritarian Innovators: Forming a Nuanced Understanding of China's Industrial Policy and Innovativeness (Elina Sinkkonen, Finnish Institute for International Affairs & Outi Luova, University of Turku)</p>	<p>Panel 6 China's Influence in the Asia Pacific Chair: Kamilla Szczepanska (University of Turku) Assistant: Erika Kosonen</p> <p>China's New Trade Governance in Asia-Pacific (Erja Kettunen, University of Turku & Claes G. Alvstam, University of Gothenburg)</p> <p>China's Belt and Road Initiative in Indo-Pacific: Opportunities & Challenges for Japan (Jelena Glisic, Research Institute for Indo-Pacific Affairs, Japan)</p> <p>Japanese Responses to China's Rise: Perspectives from Higher Education (Eva Liias, University of Tartu)</p>

	Covid-19 (David O'Brien & Melissa Shani Brown, Ruhr-Universität Bochum)		
15:30-17:55	<p>Panel 7 China's Rise in the Global Arctic Chairs: Sanna Kopra (University of Lapland) & Liisa Kauppila (University of Turku) Assistant: Julia Keipi</p> <p>China's Functional Economic Regions in the Making: The Arctic Case (Liisa Kauppila, University of Turku)</p> <p>The Role of Science Diplomacy in China-Nordic Arctic Relations (Egill Thor Nielsson, The Icelandic Centre for Research)</p> <p>Possibility of Strategic Arctic Cooperation between China and the EU: A Tentative Study based on Comparing Arctic Participation (Yue Wang, University of Tampere)</p> <p>The Rise of China and Arctic Regional international society (Sanna Kopra, University of Lapland)</p>	<p>Panel 8 Citizen-State Relations: Feedback Mechanisms and Public Reactions to Policy Developments Chair: Monique Taylor (University of Helsinki) Assistant: Ira Kolkkinen</p> <p>Feedback Mechanisms under 'Top-level Design': What about the Silent Voices? (Hedda Flatø, Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research)</p> <p>Honor Obliges? Discerning Role Perceptions in China's Local People's Political Consultative Conferences (Rebakka Åsnes Sagild, Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, University of Oslo)</p> <p>Leaving the Labor Market in Sichuan: Demographic Change or a New Employment Trend? (Zhang Huafeng, Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research)</p> <p>Return of the Local – Social Cohesion and Trust 10 years after the Wenchuan Earthquake (Kristin Dalen, Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research)</p>	<p>Panel 9 Gender in China & its Lesson for Asia: Land Right, Forced Migration and Matriarchal Society Chair: Pia Eskelinen (University of Turku) Assistant: Erika Kosonen</p> <p>Rural Women's Land Rights in China: Lessons Learned or Avoided (Pia Eskelinen, University of Turku)</p> <p>Matrilineality Across Borders: China and India (Biatrisha Mukhopadhyay, Jawaharlal Nehru University)</p> <p>Vietnamese Female Returnees from Forced Migration: An Explorative Study on Gathering Agency to Break Intersectional Constraints (Linh Le, KU Leuven)</p>
17:00-19:00	Public Event: In China's Shadow? Two New Books on Southeast Asia (click to check detailed info)		

Friday 11 June, 2021

The time is Finnish Helsinki Time. It is 1 hour ahead of Central European Time.

Time	Events		
10:00-10:25	What is the future for the AsiaPortal and e-resources collection for Chinese studies? Inga-Lill Blomkvist, NIAS Library & Information Center		
10:25-10:55	Keynote speech by Mette Halskov Hansen, Professor of China Studies, University of Oslo <i>Ecological Civilization: Chinese Dream or Global Strategy?</i>		
11:00 -12:30	<p>Panel 10 Belt and Road Initiative Chair: Camilla T. N. Sørensen (Royal Danish Defense College) Assistant: Julia Keipi</p> <p>China's BRI on the Polar Silk Road: Evolving Labor Agenda in the Arctic (Ronald Brown, University of Hawaii)</p> <p>Governing Infrastructure or Infrastructural Governing? (Jessica DiCarlo, University of Colorado Boulder)</p> <p>Effect of China's Belt and Road Initiative on Central Asia –Importance of Host State Considerations (James F. Paradise, Yonsei University; Chris Primiano, KIMEP University)</p> <p>Sino-Russian Geopolitical Cooperation in Eurasia: The Conjunction of the EAEU and the BRI (Mher Sahakyan, China-Eurasia Council for Political and Strategic Research, Armenia)</p>	<p>Panel 11 Digital China Chair: Mette Halskov Hansen (University of Oslo) Assistant: Ira Kolkkinen</p> <p>A Governance Perspective on China's Digital Authoritarianism (Monique Taylor, University of Helsinki)</p> <p>China's Rise and the Countryside: ICT as Principal Actants in Techno-Scientific Visions for 'Building a Beautiful Countryside' (Julia, Marincaccio, University of Bergen)</p> <p>Artificial Intelligence in Chinese Newsrooms (Joanna Kuai, Karlstad University)</p>	<p>Panel 12 Democratic Movements & Protests Chair: Dusica Ristivojevic (University of Helsinki) Assistant: Erika Kosonen</p> <p>'Unified and Centralised Leadership' under Xi Jinping: Implications for the International Role of the Pearl River Delta (Siv H. Oftedal, University of Oslo)</p> <p>The Rise of Nationalism in China and Hong Kong: A Focus on Ethnicity and Gender (Sui-Ting Kong, Durham University; Petula Sik-Ying Ho, University of Hong Kong; Stevi Jackson, University of York)</p> <p>Political Protests on Chinese Soil: Comparing Four Major Protest Events in Post-colonial Hong Kong (Yun Tong TANG, University of Manchester)</p> <p>'One City, Two Attitudes: Hong Kong's Legal Mobilisation in Response to China's Influence' (Alvin Hoi-Chun HUNG, University of Oxford)</p> <p>The Enemy of my Enemy is my Friend?: China's Rise, Chinese Political Exiles, and</p>

			Their International Allies (Dusica Ristivojevic, University of Helsinki)
12:30-13:15	Break		
13:15-14:45	<p>Panel 13 History, Literature and Sinology Chair: Guowen Shang (University of Bergen) Assistant: Julia Keipi</p> <p>Reinscribing The Inner Chamber: Song Lyrics on The Boudoir Theme by Ge Xiuying (1773-1791) (Shu LI, University of Uppsala)</p> <p>Climate, Omens and Prognostication in 17th Century East China (Erling Agoey, University of Oslo)</p> <p>The Imaginary Landscapes of Wei Yingwu's and Wang Wei's Poetry (Tero Tähtinen, University of Tampere)</p> <p>Imagining Chinese Hegemony in Future History and Alternate History in Chinese Science Fiction (Erik Mo WELIN, Uppsala University)</p>	<p>ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: Asian Public opinion on China in the age of COVID-19 & Conclusion of the conference</p> <p>Moderator: Richard Q. Turcsányi (Palacky University Olomouc) Assistant: Ira Kolkkinen</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <p>Kristina Kironska (Palacky University Olomouc) Chih-Jou (Jay) Chen (Academia Sinica) Jagannath Panda (Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses) Julie Yu-Wen Chen (University of Helsinki) Duncan McCargo (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies)</p> <p>14:45-15:00 We will have a brief conclusion for the conference directly in this roundtable.</p>	
15:05-16:00	NACS General Assembly (open to NACS members ONLY)		
16:05-17:00	NACS Board Meeting (open to Board Members ONLY)		

Some technical tips and rules for our conference participants:

- The participants of this conference is limited to people who have signed up for the conference. Registration form will be sent out in May. In general, participants are from the following groupings 1) keynote speakers; 2) presenters; 3) chairs and discussants; 4) board members of Nordic Association of China Studies; 5) main staff from Nordic Institute of Asian Studies; 6) volunteers/trainees who help out throughout the events; 7) limited number of registered participants.

- You can access the conference through the Zoom desktop client, web browser or mobile app. We recommend downloading the desktop version beforehand.
- Click the links to join. **Please check that your internet connection is reliable/strong enough**, as even small disruptions can disconnect you from the video conference.
- There are zoom links and passcodes for accessing different panels/events in the conference (NO WAITING ROOM). **YOU CANNOT SHARE THE INFORMATION WITH ANYONE, for security reasons**. Our conference is only for registered participants. It is not for the public nor for general teaching for students, unless specifically stated in the programme.
- When you enter the zoom meeting, please put down your full name (First Name and Family Name Both) so that people know who you are. (On zoom, go to **“participants”**, and then find your name there. Click **“more”** and then **“rename”**. This way you can put down your full name). **If our conference assistants do not see your full name and suspect this is an outsider not belonging to the conference, the assistant has the right to remove you from the event).**
- Filming/recording these events is not allowed, unless permission is given by the chair of the panel in advance. (Exception: three keynote speeches will be recorded and published online later.)
- Before joining the conference events, make sure that your mic and camera are working. Please mute your mic when you are not speaking.
- Have your camera on when speaking and make sure that you have good lighting and a suitable background. We recommend you to place your camera at the same level as your eyes.
- During your speech, please keep an eye on the time, and speak only during your allocated time slot.
- If you are presenting in a panel, please join your panel around 15 minutes before it starts. Conference assistant will help you check the mics and cameras and make sure everyone knows how to use the screen share tool. (Conference assistant will be in the panel 20 minutes before it starts).
- If you are a participant in the conference, you can change panels in the middle of an event as you wish.
- During the conference, if you have inquiries, please email to “nacsnnc@helsinki.fi”.

Tips for panel chairs:

- **Each panel’s chair decides** 1) whether presenters in the panel should circulate their papers in advance or not 2) format to comment on each other’s work. It could be that speakers will take turns to discuss others’ papers. Alternatively, one person can be assigned to comment on all presentations in the panel 3) **If someone wants a recording of a panel, ask the panel’s chair and presenters directly.**
- **Each panel’s chair decides** whether presenters will submit powerpoint slides before conference or not. Chair panel communicates with presenters directly on this matter. If anyone wants a speaker’s slides, please directly email the speaker after the conference.
- During the Q&A, participants will use the chat. It is ***the responsibility of the chair to moderate the discussion using the chat.***
- If slides/share screen do not function well, chair has the right to tell the presenter to speak without slides. Time is limited for each panel. We simply cannot waste a lot of time to fix small problems. Chair has to ensure his/her panel can run as smoothly as possible.

- To make sure the events can run smoothly and on time without delay, the chair should strive to end his/her panel AT LEAST 5 minutes before the ending time so as to give people enough time to move to the next panel. Conference assistant will remind the panel chair of the time and make sure there is no delay in finishing the panel.
- The closing event is from 14:45 to 15:00 (Helsinki time) and it is directly following the Roundtable discussion listed on the programme. It is recommended that participants in the last panel can finish earlier and move to the Roundtable discussion, if they wish to attend the closing event.
- We have a conference journalist (Pierantonio La Vena) who is in charge of taking pictures of panels. He moves from panel to panel to take pictures. We also have 3 students (Erika Kosonen, Ira Kolkkinen, Julia Keipi) serving as conference assistants during the conference.

Panel 1 China's Rise and its Impact on Southeast Asia and South Asia

Chair: William Callahan (LSE)

Hedging against China: The Reactions of the Middle Powers Vietnam and the Philippines to China's Rise (Alfred Gerstl, Palacky University Olomouc)

After the end of the Cold War, the Southeast Asian nations as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) normalized their relations with China. Since then, both the political and economic ties deepened. However, while the Southeast Asian countries benefit economically from China's rise, not least due to the cooperation under the frame of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), there exist also fears about becoming economically and subsequently politically dependent on Beijing. China's growing military power, notably its assertive behavior in the South China Sea, raises further concerns. Responding to the opportunities and risks stemming from the relations with China, the middle powers Vietnam and the Philippines pursue a hedging strategy. Their objective is to benefit from the relations with China, while simultaneously deepening their political, economic and security ties with the United States and Japan. Thus, instead of bandwagoning with China, they can apply a mix of cooperative and confrontative measures towards China. This presentation will apply a re-conceptualized hedging framework to compare the two hedging strategies. A major component of this framework is the category "perception of state leaders of the risks and benefits posed by the hedging target". The other components examine the political-diplomatic and economic relations as well as the limited balancing and limited bandwagoning behavior of the hedger towards China. Based on this framework, the presentation will explain why Vietnam applies more confrontative measures towards China than the Philippines.

China's Rise in Indonesia: Xinyimin and the ethnic conflict in context of Indonesian Islamic Society (Elo Süld, University of Tartu)

The rise of China is causing foreign ethnic conflicts in Southeast Asia. Xinyimin, the new migrants from China have been entering Southeast Asia since the beginning of the 21st century. Indonesia welcomes his new investors (and they workers) while Chinese companies also need resources from Indonesia.

Indonesia also has its own ethnic Chinese community. This ethnic Chinese are integrated into Indonesian society, master the language and culture. At the same time the new Chinese Migrants bring other values and principles, the gap in society between the two groups is widening. Their number of new migrants is growing. The new Chinese migrants are quite young and are often better educated than the old migrants – better works for Chinese companies.

Indonesia is the largest Islamic country in the world and the country's history is familiar with various religions and ethnic bloody conflicts. The relationship between xinyimin and Chinese Indonesians are generally not close, especially since the younger generation of Chinese Indonesians have lost an active command of Mandarin and they see new migrants as competitors for workplaces. Xinyimin can also become a frictional topic for indigenous people who consider them foreigners and new exploiters. The problems between these different groups are creasing.

Bangladeshi Responses to China's Rise (Arild Engelsen Ruud & Mohammad AbuBakar Siddique, University of Oslo)

Bangladesh' relation with India is its most important foreign policy relation and has been since its emergence as an independent nation fifty years ago. Almost the entire border of Bangladesh is with India; the two have substantial and intricate economic relations; and there are deep historical, cultural and political bonds in spite of some conflicts (including over the question of Bangladeshi 'migrants' in India and border killings).

China is far weaker in terms of soft power. But it is making marked advances in economic sectors, contributing expertise and financing to major infrastructure developments, and it is Bangladesh' by far largest arms supplier. A complicating element is the obvious Chinese reluctance to antagonise the Burmese over the Rohingya question. The Bangladesh government has at times openly embraced the Chinese approaches, and at other times clearly snubbed their advances. So far they successfully been balancing Chinese and Indian interests against one another, but the situation is complex for a relatively small nation and requires dexterity.

There are several interesting tensions caused by the increased Chinese presence in Bangladesh the last few years. China's increased influence on Bangladesh has caused irritation among Bangladesh' longstanding allies - in particular India but also noticeable in the US reaction in Dhaka. There are for instance statements from Washington that have been interpreted as muted warnings. Moreover, there are differences in how relations with India and China are perceived and discussed popularly and among the elite and the policy makers. This may lay the groundwork for potential domestic fallout. Islamists now are more focused on the situation of Muslims in Delhi but also very much aware of China's Uighur policy. The increased Chinese influence on Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal and Burma is also noticed with some apprehension in Dhaka circles.

[An Analysis of Laotian Trust in China under the Background of China-Laos Community of Shared Future: The Ontological Security of Small-States under the Asymmetric Relations \(Xiao FANG, Jinan University\)](#)

How to successfully interact with small states and win the real trust of small states is a test of the diplomatic ability of super powers. The reason is that in the bilateral asymmetric relations, the small state will be more likely to magnify the threat of the super power, so it will be difficult for the small state to have a high degree of trust in the super power. However, in the interaction between China and Laos, Laos has been trusting China to a large extent, reached a consensus with China on deeper cooperation for building a China-Laos community of Shared future. Why didn't Laos magnify China's threat and trust China when the two countries' power was so different? This paper introduces the concept of "ontological security" to analyze this phenomenon. The ontological security of a small state originates from the autobiographical narrative and the stable interaction between major powers and itself. Major powers need to understand the autobiographical narrative and identity cognition of small states, and further understand their ontological security needs, to satisfy their ontological security by establishing a fixed interaction mode on an acceptable basis. In the case of China-Laos interaction, China has accepted and met Laotian ontological security needs and interacted with Laos in the mode for Laotian comfort. Laotian ontological security has been satisfied by China, and therefor trust in China.

[China and Myanmar's Coup D'etat \(Tiina Airaksinen, University of Helsinki\)](#)

In the beginning of February 2021 Myanmar coup d'état was launched when democratically elected members of the National League for Democracy (NLD), were removed by the Tatmadaw (Myanmar's military). Army thus declared a year-long state of emergency and declared power had been assigned to Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Min Aung Hlaing. The coup d'état occurred just the day before the Parliament of Myanmar was due to swear in the members elected at the November 2020 general election, thereby preventing this from occurring. In these elections the NLD candidates were winning over 80% of the government's seats.

The Chinese government did not directly condemn the coup. This was not surprise as they have never criticised regime changes in other countries. Formally, non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries has long been a core principle of China's foreign policy. At the same time, China has

tightened its politico-economic grip with Myanmar. Only in 2020 China and Myanmar signed over 30 Memorandums of Understanding. Thus, Myanmar is actively participating China–Myanmar Economic Corridor -project as part of China’s Belt and Road Initiative and moreover, Myanmar has also signed free trade agreements that have interested China.

China’s investment in the country is dependent on whether Myanmar has a stable, internationally accepted government. It would not be logical for China to support a military government that is economically restrained by the rest of international community. But as Myanmar has become sanctioned with again its economy declines, and thus, China might lose a market for its products. In the end, China does not seem to benefit from a military coup in Myanmar. In my presentation I will delve into China-Myanmar’s current relations and discuss on strategies and politics behind their activities.

Panel 2 Cycles, Progress, Ruptures:

Conceptual Articulations of *Change* in Chinese Intellectual History

Chair: Hilde De Weerd (Leiden University)

Evolution-Revolution-Transformation: Concepts of Change in Premodern China (Lisa Indraccolo, Tallinn University)

This paper studies three distinct though closely interconnected concepts of “change” employed in Classical Chinese philosophy to describe different ways in which both natural and human phenomena can morph in time and space: a) *tōng* 通 “evolution,” the smooth and relatively controlled – though happening without coercion – transition of one state into another conceptually contiguous state of being; b) *biàn* 變 “revolution,” the abrupt subversion of one relatively stable state of being, possibly through external intervention, and its transition into an opposite, discontinuous state; and c) *huà* 化 “transmutation,” the organic transformation of a substance from one physical state into another, the almost physiological mutation of an inner disposition, or the natural manifestation of the elements, typically induced by a “change” (*yì* 易) in the external environmental conditions (Tian 2000; Cai 2001; Sato 1998, 2005). *Tōngbiàn* 通變 as a binomial is a well-established trope in mid- to late-imperial literature. However, it is fairly uncommon in early Chinese texts, where it is occasionally used in combination with similar binary oppositional pairs, especially *yīnyáng* 陰陽, underlying its origin and initial conceptual elaboration within the *Yì* 易 mantic tradition. *Biànhuà* 變化 instead is more widely attested and seems to have coalesced as a binomial at a much earlier stage, as it occurs consistently already in late Warring States texts. The present paper explores the multifaceted meanings that these three terms assume also in connection to one another in pertinent examples drawn from pre-imperial and early imperial received philosophical texts.

From Changing Aesthetics to Aesthetics of Change: The Concept of *huagong* in Li Zhi’s Literary Thought (Phillip Grimberg, Friedrich-Alexander University in Erlangen-Nuremberg)

When the writings of the late Ming polymath Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602) were rediscovered during the course of the May Fourth Movement of 1919, one thing that struck a chord with contemporary notions of modernity and cultural renewal was Li Zhi’s “rebellious spirit” and his advocacy for the radical disruption of traditions. Some proponents of the movement like Lin Yutang or Zhou Zuoren identified some of his writings as the foundations of modernity in Chinese literary thought. Two of his works in particular – the essays *Tongxin shuo* (“On the Child-Like Mind”) and *Zashuo* (“Miscellanea”) were to become the headstone of contemporary debates on Late Ming literary discourse. One of the concepts that is of interest here, is Li Zhi’s notion of “transformed works of literature” (*huagong* 化工) as opposed to “factitious works of literature” (*huagong* 畫工). These transformed works, altered from their more traditional counterparts by virtue of the author’s innate knowledge and creative spontaneity laid the foundations for a school of thought that advocated for “change” within Late Ming intellectual syncretism. Opposed to Confucian ideas of tradition and continuity, the literary and aesthetic implications of Li Zhi’s concept of *huagong* mirror his general scepticism towards orthodoxy as well as his historical relativism. For him, change in literature – both aesthetically and in respect of content – and social change stem from the same root: the realisation that the past cannot be a model for the present or the future, instead constant change and intellectual disruptions are necessary by-products of human development. In this paper I will try and show how Li Zhi viewed the concept of transformation or change both from a literary and social perspective and what consequences follow from this position for the intellectual worldmaking during the Late Ming and the early years of the Chinese Republic.

Rethinking Change at the Threshold of Modernity: On Gong Zizhen's Philosophy of History (Dawid Rogacz, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)

Gong Zizhen 龔自珍 (1792-1841) is rightly referred to as the last thinker of the classical era and the first of the modern one. Living at the threshold of the Opium Wars, Gong argued that there are “no laws that do not change” and attempted to build his reformist program upon a comprehensive philosophy of history. One of its basic assumptions was that the tripartite and progressive scheme of history derived from the New Text Confucianism is a universal key to the knowledge of both the entirety of history and its component periods. In this manner, Gong Zizhen wanted to reconcile the cyclical model of history with the linear one and, consistently, the paradigm of classicism with newborn historicism. In addition, in the essays *On the Patrilineage System in Agriculture* and *On Equal Distribution*, Gong traced the genealogy of contemporaneous inequalities starting from the rise of private property. Importantly, his economic (yet non-revolutionary) ideal of the epoch of Supreme Peace coincided with a belief in the progressive accumulation of human knowledge. The paper shows that this multifaceted and ambiguous vision of history broke with the premodern Chinese understanding of change and had a huge impact upon the thought of Kang Youwei and early Chinese Marxists.

Revolutionary Change vs Harmonious Transformation: Ai Siqi, Mao Zedong, Tang Yijie: Chinese Interpretations of Marxist Dialectics (Federico Brusadelli, University of Naples “L’Orientale”)

When Marxism, up to that point a relatively marginal “Western” intellectual trend, became the ideological platform of one of the two main political agents in China, its supporters felt the urgency to “domesticate” an ideology that, as universal as it aspired to be, was nonetheless rooted in the European experience. From the late 1920s to the present day, the Sinicization of Marxism has therefore constituted an ongoing process of intellectual appropriation, translation and negotiation; or to be more precise, a plurality of discourses often distant when not conflicting in their inspirations and agenda. The present paper will look at these “discursive realms” by focusing on how Marxist concepts of “change” (in more Marxian words, its dialectics) were differently introduced and translated into China, by different actors and at different moments.

More specifically, the contribution of three figures will be examined, stressing differences and echoes between their conceptualizations of “change” : Ai Siqi 艾思奇 (1910-1966), the first to proclaim the need for “sinicizing Marxist philosophy” in 1938; Mao Zedong 毛泽东, who exploited the potential of dialectics in his theory of revolution; and finally Tang Yijie 汤一介 (1927-2013).

The latter, a proud Confucianist, was actively engaged in demonstrating the usefulness of Classicism in the processes of Chinese “modernization” and “globalization”. In this framework, he touched the politically sensitive issue of the interaction between Confucianism and Marxism: advocating the synthesis of two different philosophies, he consequently attempted a “harmonization” of Marxian dialectics, offering a transformative, rather than disrupting, conception of “change” as the Confucian contribution to a sinicized form of Communism for a post-revolutionary China.

Panel 3 **China's Rise and its Impact on Korea's Future**

Chair: Stephen Ranger (University of Turku)

Loosening or Tightening the Linchpin? The Effects of China's Approach to US THAAD Deployment in South Korea (Bee Yun Jo, Korea Institute for Defense Analyses)

China's coercive response to the 2016 deployment of the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile system in South Korea has been dubbed as its attempt to "loosen the linchpin" of the ROK-US alliance. While China is likely to continue to exploit gaps in the alliance, this paper aims to question whether Beijing's pressure has brought about the intended effects of driving a wedge between Seoul and Washington. By reviewing the post-THAAD changes in South Korea's armament choices and strategy toward US-China relations, this paper seeks to study the effects of China's coercion on South Korea's security choices.

It will pay particular attention to how Beijing's political pressure has influenced Seoul's armament choices that are critical for the planned transfer of Wartime Operational Control (OPCON) from the US to South Korea. The main findings of the paper will have significant implications for both China and South Korea. For China, the findings may suggest that its continued coercion may cause a hardening of South Korea's distrust, "(re-)tightening" than "loosening" of the security linchpin of the ROK-US alliance. For South Korea, the attempts to diversify and/or evade the strategic deadlock in US-China relations may prove in vain given the resilient confines of the ROK-US alliance in shaping its security choices.

Roaring Currents: The Korean Film Industry amidst the Rise of China (Jimmyn Parc, Seoul National University & Sciences Po Paris)

Films can have significant social, political, and even economic impact. As a result, politicians and governments from all political persuasions have sought to exploit films for their own benefit. However, this practice is not limited to one's domestic films. It is widely known that China's investment into Hollywood has been used to deliver positive images of the country by featuring Chinese actors and well-known Chinese scenery, or even creating scenarios based on Chinese culture.

Korea is also becoming a target for China's investment. As Korean films have emerged domestically and internationally, a number of Chinese companies have begun to invest directly and indirectly in the Korean film industry. This has been happening during a complex period for the Korean film industry amidst the rise of China and, more recently, the relatively China friendly policies under Moon Jae-in administration. In this regard, it is very important to explore the influence of China on Korean films and its contents. This can be a very sensitive topic for Koreans given that the country has experienced a number of traumatic historical events.

By examining films that have drawn attention from media outlets, this paper reveals that most of the titles that feature anti-Japanese or anti-US themes as well as those with pro-China or North Korea content have benefited from Chinese investment. This fact should be carefully considered for the development of the Korean film industry as well as for the future of Korea.

Analyzing the Impact of China's Rise on the Dokdo Dispute (Stephen Ranger, University of Turku)

The Dokdo dispute between South Korea and Japan is one of the most contentious issues between the two countries and remains an impediment to closer bilateral security ties. Despite a number of mutual interests between Seoul and Tokyo, such as managing the North Korean nuclear issue, the Dokdo dispute overrides any efforts to enhance security ties. At the same time, China's rise presents both countries with a common challenge on how to respond and which path to pursue. So far Beijing has kept out of the dispute despite the fact that it has a number of maritime territorial disputes with both Seoul and Tokyo. To what extent then does China's rise have an effect on the Dokdo issue? Does its growing power status in the region exacerbate the dispute or does it offer a chance for some limited resolution?

To examine these questions, it is critical to consider the evolution of the dispute in relation to China's rise and consider whether its security strategies toward the region have created difficulties. In terms of what role China could play, a consideration of potential mediation strategies and international law aspects will be analyzed so as to provide policy recommendations. The overall conclusion is that while China's rise has not had a directly negative effect, the role the country could play as mediator is limited. This will be therefore one of the main barriers toward it playing a bigger role in the region.

Panel 4 China in 2020

Chair: Matti Puranen (National Defense University)

Ideological Debates in the Rectifying Foreign Place Names Campaign in China (Guowen Shang, University of Bergen)

In 2019, many provinces and municipalities in China waged a war on the practices of using western names for buildings and places, a maneuver known as “rectifying foreign place names campaign” in mainland China. Real Estate projects and residential compounds with western place names (e.g. Manhattan Garden, Golden Vienna, Mediterranean, Cannes Street and Times Town) are the main targets for crackdown. Such a campaign drew wide media attention and caused considerable controversies among Chinese people. For the governmental authorities, this endeavor was meant to get rid of foreign-worshipping stuff and instil cultural confidence to Chinese people. For city residents and the general public, however, the responses were diversified. Some held that the campaign was an unnecessary intervention into private space and life, which could cause a myriad of problems and inconvenience in social life. Others hailed the planning endeavor, arguing that the untamed expansion of foreign place names was an annoyance for them. Using approaches in discourse analysis and applying Bourdieu’s concepts of symbolic power and Habermas’s validity claims in communication, this paper examines the ideological debates in the official and non-official discourses regarding this top-down name planning endeavour in China. News reports and online commentaries related to the issue are collected as the major source of data analysis. It is found that the government authorities upheld nationalist ideology in the campaign under the aegis of cultural confidence and national dignity. By battling against the foreign place names on China’s terrain, the governments intend to construct themselves as guards of Chinese cultural values and thus enhance their symbolic power and governing legitimacy. However, the planning without adequate dialogue with stakeholders and participants was doomed as a result of distorted communicative rationality.

Graduate Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Opportunities and Challenges in China’s Greater Bay Area (Dian LIU, University of Stavanger)

University entrepreneurship has been greatly encouraged by the Chinese government as key strategy of enhancing innovation and creation during recent years. Despite of the increasing scholarly work on general growth of business incubators and start-ups, little is known about the subset of enterprises with university students or graduates as the major actors. Individual graduate entrepreneurs’ agency, their own experiences, attitudes, and views remain a myth, as well as the factors and processes that shape or refine their perspectives. Inspired by the concept entrepreneurial opportunity, this study provides empirical illustrations of how entrepreneurship ideas were shaped and developed in intensified trend of entrepreneurship and innovation in the Greater Bay Area from university graduates’ perspective. Drawn upon case studies of graduate entrepreneurs starting up their own business in China’s Greater Bay Area, this study examines the recognition of entrepreneurship opportunities from the graduate entrepreneurs, as well as the challenges in activating such entrepreneurship opportunities in their start up practice. More specifically, this study focuses on, firstly, the experiences and perceptions of the development of the start-ups and entrepreneurial practices. Secondly, the role of the different stakeholders, namely, policies at national and regional levels, and institutional enhancement, in facilitating the development of the start-ups and entrepreneurship practice. And thirdly, to reveal the reflections and perceptions on the positive and negative practices during the development of the start-ups for further policy recommendations.

[China's Nation Branding in COVID-19 Pandemic: A Narrative Analysis of China's Daily Tweets on Covid-19 \(Wenjia Zhou, University of Turku\)](#)

First identified in 2019 in Wuhan, China, COVID-19 has changed almost everyone's life around the globe in 2020. Since the beginning of 2020, China has been accused of failing to control the coronavirus and covering up covid-19 related information. In March 2020, COVID-19 was characterized as a pandemic by World Health Organization. While the infection number increases in many other countries, China has gradually controlled its COVID-19 crisis. With different ways of propaganda and public diplomacy, China has begun propagating its narrative on the state's contribution to managing COVID-19 both nationally and internationally. Kaneva (2011, p.118) defined nation branding as "a compendium of discourses and practices aimed at reconstituting nationhood through marketing and branding paradigms". Drawing on the concept of nation branding, I want to explore how China uses state-affiliated media outlets to brand itself targeting foreign audiences. This research examines China Daily's tweets from November 15th, 2020 to January 15th, 2021 on COVID-19. With a narrative analysis approach, I seek to answer these research questions: 1) what kind of stories on COVID-19 are told by China Daily on Twitter? 2) how are the narratives of these stories constructed? 3) what kind of national identity is presented through these stories?

[Racism, Biopolitics and Nationalism: 'China' in the Italian and British Media Discourses during the Early Stage of the Covid-19 Pandemic \(Wing-Fai LEUNG & Maria Paola POFI, King's College London\)](#)

Italy was one of the first European countries affected by the Covid-19 pandemic after the outbreak in China was reported in January 2020, while the UK went into its first national lockdown on the 23rd March 2020. Applying critical discourse analysis, this paper explores the discursive strategies used by the Italian and British news media and social media to represent China and the Chinese people in relation to the outbreak in the early stage of the pandemic (up to the end of March in Italy and end of May in the UK). Employing the theoretical frameworks of Mary Douglas, Michel Foucault, and other thinkers on biopolitics, racism, and emergency, the results bring to light the ideologies behind the construction of China as virus bearer and spreader, which reflect existing discourses toward the Chinese community in Italy, and the underlying state-racism in Britain. The media communication in the Italian and British news also reflected responses to the economic and political rise of contemporary China. Since this early stage, the development of the pandemic in the two countries has continued in parallel but different paths. By interrogating and comparing these media discourses, the respective cultural and political contexts, and the ideologies towards 'China' and 'Asia' in the two mediascapes, this research explains the Italian and British policies in tackling the pandemic as an expression of nationhood in an age of global connectedness.

[Infectious Extremism: The Biopolitical Repercussions for Xinjiang in the Wake of Covid-19 \(David O'Brien & Melissa Shani Brown, Ruhr-Universität Bochum\)](#)

In an article published in 2018, Sean Roberts offers a biopolitical reading of the use of internment to deal with ethnic tension in Xinjiang. He identifies in official discourses in China the ways in which extremism and separatism is likened to a disease from which the 'normal, healthy' population needs to be 'quarantined'. Rather than framing such threats as ideological attacks upon a political order, the danger is presented as a threat to the general population, and one which conversely situates part of that population (ostensibly 'extremists' and 'terrorists' but in practice largely members of particular ethnic groups) as culpable for posing this threat. This enables government to situate itself as the pastoral guardian of the general population, responsible for keeping them safe by any measures. Here, we consider this argument in the current context in the wake of Covid-19 in China where fear of real infection and quarantining on a massive scale have been normalised, as has extensive use of surveillance and monitoring. Posing questions for the future, we argue that Covid-19 has created a situation in which such measures are validated as means of dealing with crises.

Panel 5 China's Use of Economic Power and its' Manifold Backlashes

Chair: Mikael Mattlin (University of Turku)

Measuring and Mapping China's Rise in Asia: Case Studies and Critical Research Alternatives (Keegan Elmer, University of Helsinki)

China's relations with other nations have hit a number of stumbling blocks during the four-year tenure of US president Donald Trump. In its relations with the west, China's power and influence has in many ways stagnated—or even declined—during this period. China clashed with North America and Europe over trade, investment, and human rights issues, while public opinion of China has plummeted. Tensions with Asian neighbors take on a different character, however, and include explosive border disputes and accusations of political domination of smaller countries. This paper looks at China's relations to its Asian border countries and asks whether China's rise in power and influence has been interrupted, or even declined in its neighbor countries, and explores further how we might answer such a question. I first critically examine existing measures of China's power and influence in the literature on "China's rise" on the global stage. I then offer a comprehensive overview of several metrics of power across all of China's border countries, covering economic issues like trade and investment trends, to thorny political issues like Hong Kong and Xinjiang. I then offer brief case studies of concrete conflicts in three very different neighbor countries: Pakistan, India and Vietnam. I conclude with a critical comment on the limitations existing empirical measures and propose an alternative research program that could better model the generative mechanisms behind China's rise, and its global power and influence.

Relations before Economic Gains: Insights from the Arctic Case (Liisa Kauppila, University of Turku)

This paper analyses China's use of economic power and its manifold backlashes from the perspective of relationalism. It starts from the premise that China is currently seeking to become a primary node of the global economy by building a network of functional economic regions, spaces of flows that connect the country with major macro localities from Africa to the Arctic through movement of goods, energy, technology, data and knowledge. Since these master clusters of flows are global spheres of China's economic influence and instruments of its power, an analysis of their making offers a window to both Chinese ways of exerting influence on localities and local responses to them. By drawing insights from the timely Arctic case, the paper suggests that the Chinese (region-building) practices of making infrastructure investments, establishing Chinese outposts (e.g. science and satellite stations) and leasing harbours are important for the country's current economic development, but they are also triggering backlashes that carry the potential to turn the public opinion against Chinese engagement. Therefore, in acting out its primary node vision in democratic countries with active civil societies, the Chinese government faces a dilemma: it must secure the access to crucial global flows and yet abstain from provoking the public of these societies too much – a process that may involve adopting new kinds of influencing techniques. This suggests that managing relations—which, as Qin (2016) argue, are power—is not only a process between governments but engages other sectors of democratic societies, even marginal groups.

Nordic Security Rethink on Chinese Investments: Back to the Future? (Mikael Mattlin, University of Turku & Mikko Rajavuori, University of Eastern Finland)

The Nordic countries have traditionally been regarded as open economies. In particular after the end of the Cold War, the Nordic countries have all emphasized liberal and open trade in a global economy, and also generally adopted liberal policies on foreign direct investments, with some national variation. Apart from Finland, all other Nordic countries until recently lacked national legislation on foreign investments. However, a wave of investments by

companies from an authoritarian country (China) have in the past few years drawn attention to possible strategic motivations behind such investments. This coincides with a more general rethink in Europe and the United States of the links between liberal economies, investment policies and security. Importantly, the rethink is quickly being operationalized through legal and policy changes, e.g. in relation to investment screening. The Nordic countries are a particularly interesting set of cases, as they can be regarded as a bell-weather for changing global trends—from emphasizing free and open markets and liberal investment policies towards the return of national and economic security, as well as national borders as relevant issues in trade and investment. At the same time, the divergence in concrete policies highlights the difficulties in adopting a common Nordic approach to Chinese investments. This paper surveys recent legislative and policy changes in the Nordic countries with a view to shedding light on a shifting trend in global economic governance.

[Authoritarian Innovators: Forming a Nuanced Understanding of China's Industrial Policy and Innovativeness \(Elina Sinkkonen, Finnish Institute for International Affairs & Outi Luova, University of Turku\)](#)

Research analyzing the economic origins of regime types tends to reserve the innovative growth model to Western democracies. Yet, as data has become a new form of capital and companies in authoritarian regimes can extract large amounts of it, they may well have comparative advantage in developing cutting edge technologies which will define economic growth in the future. China's industrial policy has emphasized support for innovation in strategically important sectors where certain companies receive preferential treatment and state subsidies. Made in China 2025 plan highlighted ten priority sectors including robotics, information technology, aircraft, aerospace technology and pharmaceuticals, in which China is aiming for global dominance by 2025 using a strategy combining import substitution and generous state financing. This paper looks at the strengths and weaknesses of China's innovation policy. Why is China world's leading country in quantum communication but has so far failed to decrease dependence on foreign companies in the semiconductor value chains? How should we think about factors leading to successful innovations under the present-day great power tech wars and increasing protectionism? How does regime type matter and what are some of the other key factors defining success in technologically advanced sectors?

Panel 6 China's Influence in the Asia Pacific

Chair: Kamilla Szczepanska (University of Turku)

China's New Trade Governance in Asia-Pacific (Erja Kettunen, University of Turku & Claes G. Alvstam, University of Gothenburg)

This paper discusses China's free trade agreements (FTA) recently negotiated and concluded with Asian countries, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) as well as bilateral ones. Our aim is to explore how these initiatives are received in different Asian trade partners and how they are changing the region-wide trade governance. We adopt the concept of multilateralizing regionalism that refers to a process where issues agreed in one FTA are transferred to other FTAs and further to regional and multilateral agreements. The approach allows for an exploration spanning from the country level to regional and global levels. Empirically, we conduct a content analysis of different source materials, including the FTA texts, the related documents, and news pieces from various media archives. Our specific interest is to look at the inclusion of sustainable development issues in these agreements, which for example the European Union is striving to include in all of its new generation FTAs with Asian countries. The results are expected to illuminate the different crosscurrents in contemporary global trade governance that pull towards different directions as to the environmental and labour protection. The Asian countries are central in this process because of the growing number of FTAs in the region. The study questions the prior premise of Western countries' leadership in multilateral trade governance that has taken place through the WTO and its predecessor GATT and that is further challenged in the current status of the stalled Doha Development Agenda negotiations.

China's Belt and Road Initiative in Indo-Pacific: Opportunities & Challenges for Japan (Jelena Glisic, University of Tsukuba)

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), initially embraced with optimism, now, eight years after launching has turned into a growing concern among all parties involved, and among countries in Indo-Pacific in particular. Although BRI initially promised to bring a necessary boost to struggling economies of numerous countries across Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific, it also created more challenges than solutions in what has been called "debt trap" diplomacy. There is no doubt that such a massive project will generate significant geostrategic repercussions and have impact not only on China's immediate neighbours, but rather a global scale impact. There is a question now, what is an adequate strategy to address rising China in the Indo-Pacific, and more importantly, who are the key players in it. This presentation will attempt to identify challenges and opportunities regarding BRI in the Indo-Pacific looking from the perspective of Japan. It will explore the possible strategies for Japan vis-a-vis the BRI, looking into possible regional collaboration frameworks such as Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) initiative.

Japanese Responses to China's Rise: Perspectives from Higher Education (Eva Liias, University of Tartu)

Contacts and cooperation, mutual influence and rivalry between Japan and China can be observed throughout centuries. Recently, Japanese dialogue with China is mainly shaped by economic considerations and by security issues as well as territorial conflicts. However, the increase of Chinese universities in global university rankings brings excitement also in the higher education (HE) sector. Therefore, educational exchange between China and Japan is similarly an important aspect in understanding the role and perception of China's rise in Japan.

Governments hesitate to issue visas for foreign students with Chinese background as they fear espionage; concerns are growing regarding China's indirect influence on academic freedom globally. Despite far-reaching bilateral historical contacts in education, Japanese reaction today is no exception. Reliance on foreign students from China is essential for many universities in Japan due to the demographic crisis and declining population. However, with the increasing affluence of Chinese, "Japan passing" is threatening Japanese higher education institutions for losing a significant number of students from China to English-speaking countries. Immigration policies and global challenges of COVID-19 further challenge Japanese HE-sector.

The conference contribution examines Sino-Japanese relations from the perspective of HE and student mobility. It sheds light on China's rise by analyzing the role of internationalization of HE and trends regarding Chinese students in Japan.

Panel 7 China's Rise in the Global Arctic

Chairs: Sanna Kopra (University of Lapland) & Liisa Kauppila (University of Turku)

China's Functional Economic Regions in the Making: The Arctic Case (Liisa Kauppila, University of Turku)

This paper analyses China's global economic engagement and Arctic entrance by drawing insights from geographers' functional-relational reading of regions. It views China's rise as a process of connecting the country with major corners of the world through a network of functional economic regions, master clusters of flows of goods, energy, data, technology and knowledge. Becoming the primary node of these 'global extensions' of the Chinese economy – or spheres of China's economic influence – enables smooth movement of components of economic growth to the country, and, ultimately, serves the needs and creeds of the Chinese population and bolsters the legitimacy of the ruling party. By analysing the making of the China-Arctic functional economic region, the paper identifies different analytical mechanisms and types of practices that Chinese actors advance in their urge to give rise to such regional spaces with a degree of territoriality but a relational dynamic. In particular, it suggests that practices 1) set the stage for an emerging region by facilitating economic activities (e.g. infrastructure investments), 2) enhance China's environment-specific capacity to produce the movement that keeps the region together (e.g. test sailings), and 3) create the concrete movement that makes the region function as a unit (e.g. setting up of joint ventures). Ultimately, the paper challenges the dominant discourse according to which China is an 'external' actor in the Arctic and encourages observation of global life from the perspective of Chinese spatial imagination, as an alternative to the dominant Euro-centric reading of space.

The Role of Science Diplomacy in China- Nordic Arctic Relations (Egill Thor Nielsson, The Icelandic Centre for Research)

The aim of the article is to analyse the different use of science diplomacy in Arctic cooperation and its role in the development of China-Nordic Arctic relations. Focussing on the different forms of Nordic bilateral and multilateral interaction mechanisms in the Arctic through the role of science diplomacy in the "triple-helix" between science, industry, and governance in the context of China's Arctic strategy, which aims to build both bilateral relationships with individual Nordic countries and regional cooperation. In the Royal Society's report "New Frontiers in Science Diplomacy: Navigating the Changing Balance of Power" (2010), the future governance of the Arctic features as a case study on a region with potentially fragmented existing patchworks of legal regimes. Developments, such as increased impact of climate change, more engagement from Asian countries in Arctic affairs and escalating geopolitical tension have already affected the Arctic region. The contribution of science diplomacy needs to be expanded in dealing with the complex challenges facing the Arctic region. The report offers three policy strands, which science diplomacy can contribute to:

- 1) Providing foreign policy objectives with scientific advice ("science in diplomacy")
- 2) Facilitating international science cooperation ("diplomacy for science");
- 3) Using science cooperation to improve international relations between countries ("science for diplomacy")

All three modes of Science Diplomacy are evident in Arctic cooperation and the article aims to analyse the scope of science diplomacy in China-Nordic Arctic

relations, placing the relations within the context of the three modes of science diplomacy and a developing “Global Arctic” debate.

[Possibility of Strategic Arctic Cooperation between China and the EU: A Tentative Study based on Comparing Arctic Participation \(Yue Wang, University of Tampere\)](#)

Recently, China and the EU have shown growing interests and engagement in Arctic affairs. Both being non-Arctic actors and strategic partners, can China and the EU develop strategic cooperation in the Arctic? Similar identities and shared interests are the key factors to decide the possibility of international cooperation. However, systematic research on comparing China and the EU's Arctic participation is lacking. Guided by constructivism and Zhu's (2011) "practice of engagement" theory, this study adopted content analysis to compare China and the EU's identities and interests through their discourses and behaviors in the Arctic participation. Official discourses mostly reflect actors' positions directly and are the dominant sources for the general comparison. Actual behaviors should also be analyzed for possible distinct differences from the official discourses. Arctic shipping is a case study for this purpose. In this study, more similarities are noted in the general comparison and case study, although there are some discrepancies in certain identities and interests. 'Stakeholder', 'responsible actor', 'active and key contributor' are the key identities in both actors' discourses and behaviors. 'Governance', 'research', 'shipping', 'environment', and 'energy resources' are the shared interests in the discourses, while 'economy' is the dominant theme in actual behaviors. Theoretically, this study indicates enough space for China and the EU to develop strategic cooperation in the Arctic, which may have implications on policymaking. Tentatively, China's Polar Silk Road could be a valuable opportunity to develop strategic cooperation in the Arctic, but both should be prudent in certain fields with relatively high differences.

[The Rise of China and Arctic Regional international society \(Sanna Kopra, University of Lapland\)](#)

The ongoing transformation of great power politics – the rise of China as a world leader and the decline of the United States globally – will alter the shape of politics, economics and social life around the world. For the English School of International Relations, this power transition raises questions about how fundamental institutions of international society may be affected. Taking the Arctic region as a case study, this paper investigates how China's growing global role stands to shape international practices that constitute (regional) international society. In this way, the paper seeks to shed light on what kind of (normative) transformation the rise of China will bring about in international society and how China will define and exercise its great power role in different policy sectors.

Panel 8 Citizen-State Relations: Feedback Mechanisms and Public Reactions to Policy Developments

Chair: Monique Taylor (University of Helsinki)

Feedback Mechanisms under 'Top-level Design': What about the Silent Voices? (Hedda Flatø, Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research)

Mechanisms for channeling and responding to feedback from citizens to decision-makers have been identified as integral to the Chinese Communist Party regime's adaptability and resilience. There is ongoing debate about whether Xi administration's recentralization efforts will undermine authoritarian responsiveness. This paper reviews literature on feedback mechanisms in the field of environmental governance to assess the prospects for authoritarian responsiveness and resilience under the Xi administration's 'Top-level design'. It argues that in the environmental field, authoritarian responsiveness is far from destroyed by recentralization efforts: Instead, environmental feedback structures and practices have changed in a way that strengthens selective "hyper-responsiveness" vis-à-vis certain population groups and environmental problems. This is likely to enhance the appearance of responsiveness to specific and acute environmental problems and individual grievances, but may undermine adaptation to the population's more abstract, fundamental and long-term needs and expectations.

Honor Obliges? Discerning Role Perceptions in China's Local People's Political Consultative Conferences (Rebakka Åsnes Sagild, Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, University of Oslo)

Despite the superior role of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in representing and incorporating the most 'advanced' elements of society, so-called 'Party-external' political advisory bodies are still upheld as important fora for managing the country's societal pluralization and economic development. As a ruling strategy, infused with democratic values, local People's Political Consultative Conferences (PPCCs) at all administrative levels are tasked with collecting the input of a variety of voices for political decision-making. Selected to assist the local party-state in collecting information, proposing policies and partaking in various consultative activities, members are expected to navigate different and, at times, contradictory roles. How do these individuals themselves view their role? And which factors influence differences in role perceptions? Drawing on qualitative fieldwork in Zhejiang province in 2018 and 2019, this study shows how despite great internal diversity and individual attempts at navigating the parameters of their mandate, most PPCC-members remain bound by their recognition of the Party's 'trust' and as such, remain obligated to conform by taking a symbolic, or formalistic, role as porte-paroles of so-called "party-external" interests.

Leaving the Labor Market in Sichuan: Demographic Change or a New Employment Trend? (Zhang Huafeng, Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research)

After four decades of reform and opening up, the Chinese labor market has been experiencing a dramatic structural change. The ultimate goal of this paper is to address the important mechanisms behind the "Lewis turning-point" in the process of Chinese labor market transition, by providing a systematic review of recent labor market transformation in Sichuan between 2004 and 2018. Despite extensive debates about surplus labor in rural China and about whether China has passed, or when it will pass, the Lewis turning-point, there is little definitive information available on whether "full" employment has been reached in China. As demonstrated in the literature, demographic transformation has reduced the overall labor force participation in Western China, but it was not the only triggering factor. Based on the canonical labor supply framework, this paper also explored several other factors that have played a role in

reducing overall labor force participation in Western China across various population groups; namely, prolonged education among the youth, economic transformation and early retirement, better access to social security, labor migration, and the rising demands for family care.

[Return of the Local – Social Cohesion and Trust 10 years after the Wenchuan Earthquake \(Kristin Dalen, Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research\)](#)

Trust in local governments in areas affected by the devastating earthquake in Sichuan in 2008 had increased substantially ten years into the reconstruction of the areas. The combination of high levels of trust in central government coupled with lower levels of trust in local governments has been used to argue that political trust in China has a hierarchical pattern, inflating the ‘real’ levels of trust in the political regime (Li 2016; Dickson et al 2017; Wu and Wilkers 2018; Zhou and Jin 2018). What can the increase in trust towards local-level governments tell us about developments in the earthquake-affected areas. This paper aims to identify sources of increased local trust and further look into patterns of political trust in China. Analysis in this paper builds on an extensive pool of data from several perception- and living condition surveys collected in the area from 2008 to 2018.

Panel 9 Gender in China & its Lesson for Asia: Land Right, Forced Migration and Matriarchal Society

Chair: Pia Eskelinen (University of Turku)

Rural Women's Land Rights in China: Lessons Learned or Avoided (Pia Eskelinen, University of Turku)

Land is a powerful asset, but it also has a social function because its economic and social aspects are central in advancing gender equality. Legal control of land as well as legal and social recognition of women's uses of and rights to land, can also have catalytic effects of empowerment, increasing women's influence and status in their homes and communities. In this, China is leading the way; it has improved rural women's basic rights, including land tenure rights and its legislation. During past decades, changes in the Chinese land tenure rights and practices have brought important incentives for rural developments including farmer income and living standards.

In this aspect China is a good example on how to improve practices and secure women's rights in the society. However, the law in books differs from the law in action and the lack of women's land-use rights recognition deprives them of their chances of surviving in rural China. -They become legal ghosts. In accordance with that, it can be quite challenging or tempting for other Asian countries to follow China's lead.

This qualitative research is mainly based on interviews conducted in China. The data will be analysed within the framework of theories and philosophies grounding Chinese ideology. As this research focus on women in rural areas, Western and Chinese feminism form the theoretical and ideological background.

Matrilineality Across Borders: China and India (Biatrisha Mukhopadhyay, Jawaharlal Nehru University)

A handful of matrilineal societies are in existence all over the world. The Mosuo community of south-western China is one of the last surviving matrilineal societies in the world. Mosuo live on both sides of the Sichuan-Yunnan border. The Mosuo are primarily concentrated around the shores of Lugu Lake (泸沽湖). Lugu is one of the highest inhabited lake areas in China. Geographically, this remote area remained de-linked from the mainstream till early 1980s. The Mosuo have practiced their way of life for 2,000 years.

The Mosuo women are considered to be the head of the household. The social system adhered by the Mosuo ethnic community is believed to be matriarchal in nature. Starting from small household decisions to the decisions of choosing a partner is made by the women of the household. The transfer of property from one generation to the other is also matrilineal. Such similarities can in the social structure can be found within the tribal communities located in the north eastern region of India. For examples the Khasis in north eastern India and some more.

My study would seek to explore the social structure of the Mosuo community—considering from the perspective of social, cultural and ethnic identity of Mosuo women in the matrilineal set up and correlate it the tribal communities in in North eastern regions of India. The study would implore into the dynamics of a matrilineal community in a traditionally patriarchal country.

Vietnamese Female Returnees from Forced Migration: An Explorative Study on Gathering Agency to Break Intersectional Constraints (Linh Le, KU Leuven)

Forced migration affects women the most, since they are less advantaged in many societies: poorer, less educated and especially vulnerable to health-related problems. Unwillingly, Vietnamese women have been and are still subjected to endure the consequences of a Chinese policy that has been abolished by its government due to the negative impacts on the national population balance: the One-child policy. Due to the Chinese ever-growing gender gap, female human trafficking is rife between Vietnam and China.

Using this trafficking route as a case study, this paper employs in-depth interviews with the Vietnamese women who had been trafficked to China but were rescued and/or managed to escape and resettle in Vietnam. It argues that simply returning to their native community does not uproot the deep problem that a female body is subjected to intersectional discrimination, but rather enhanced the discernment among local community toward the returnees.

The re-integration of this particular group seems to be successful on the surface but the returnees met many setbacks and struggled to cope with psychological traumas even after many years of returning. The mentioned success should be largely attributed to the protagonist for their personal will of steel to overcome the intersectional discrimination afflicted upon them during the resettling period. Further investigation reveals that while longing for better recognition in their native community, most of the interviewees would not use social media as a means to achieve this goal, largely due to the prolonged period of being subjected to intersectional discrimination and learned helplessness.

Panel 10 Belt and Road Initiative

Chair: Camilla T. N. Sørensen (Royal Danish Defense College)

China's BRI on the Polar Silk Road: Evolving Labor Agenda in the Arctic (Ronald Brown, University of Hawaii)

China is implementing its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) into the Arctic area that is yet fashioning its labor law norms and transitioning from a subsistence to a future commercial economy. This involves eight countries which have borders on the vast area of the Arctic Ocean, which with global warming are looking toward expanding commercial activities. Finland, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Greenland (Denmark), Russia, U.S., and Canada have come together to form the Arctic Council, which is the "leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic." They often are referred to as the "Arctic 8" and there are also eight "permanent participants" with councils or associations from the various indigenous peoples' communities.

Within the Arctic Circle there are about four million inhabitants, half of which are Russians, and include indigenous peoples. The types of anticipated projects may include scientific stations, roads coming from the EU, ports and port facilities, i.e., all the construction that comes with developmental building. With BRI projects, China usually employs many of its own citizens as workers as well as hiring locally, if available. Manpower and labor force issues often accompany BRI projects, and the questions raised includes, what are the labor norms in the Arctic and what labor dispute mechanisms are available? Certainly, territorial labor laws control, but there are special needs and rules in the Arctic Circle, and some of the "Arctic 8" are European Union members who have special rules on posted workers from the EU and the Chinese may have private international arbitration agreements covering workers.

Some BRI projects are moving forward in Norway and Finland and other EU Member States even without BRI MOU agreements. Currently, only Russia has fully embraced BRI cooperation and is moving ahead on projects. The U.S. has been active in attempting to persuade some Arctic 8 countries to not enter BRI projects or MOU cooperation agreements, for professed security concerns.

Finally, discussion will include the role of private versus government regulatory standards and dispute resolution, as well as potential cooperation or trade agreements that could include labor protection provisions. Currently, Iceland has an FTA with China, though the labor provisions are weak. Also, Russia, as a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), signed an FTA with China in 2018; the EAEU is a trade bloc (often cited as Russia's answer to the EU), currently including Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia. The article will identify the types of labor issues that could arise as China's BRI moves up the Polar Silk Road and discuss possible regulatory approaches.

Governing Infrastructure or Infrastructural Governing? (Jessica DiCarlo, University of Colorado Boulder)

China's vast construction of infrastructure, particularly under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has resulted in megaprojects that are now labeled priority, strategic, or high-level projects. Take for example, the Gwadar deep water port, the Central Asia gas pipeline, Khorgos dry port, or the Laos-China railway. Often such projects have a certain level of elite or political support or immense capital behind them that make them "too big or important to fail. These projects have different names around the world. Villagers and officials in Laos described the railway as a strategic or high-level project. In both Lao and

Chinese, the railway is referred to as a “priority project” — ໂຄງການບຸລິມະສິດ (khongkaan boulimasit) or 重点工程 (zhòngdiǎn gōngchéng). But how does something become a priority project, what does that mean legally, and who gets to decide? Using the case of the Laos-China Railway, this paper reflects on these questions and argues that priority projects motivate and create new laws and policies. More specifically, as a priority project the railway motivated new regulations to lubricate construction and investment, while creating land and compensation arrangements that are saddled with vestiges of dispossession from past project-driven policies. Through policy and legal analysis, ethnographic, and qualitative methods, I examine regulatory frameworks related to displacement and land compensation for the railway—with particular focus on how domestic regulations evolved through the project’s development cycle. As existing projects are subsumed within the BRI this paper asks: Which host country regulations were in place when project agreements were signed and how have they been updated throughout the project’s development? I conclude by highlighting how existing on-the-ground challenges and inequities are exacerbated by high-profile projects and argue for more fine-grained, project-based analyses within research on global China.

[Effect of China’s Belt and Road Initiative on Central Asia –Importance of Host State Considerations \(James F. Paradise, Yonsei University; Chris Primiano, KIMEP University\)](#)

This study examines how the Belt and Road Initiative is playing out in Central Asia. At first glance, Central Asia might seem a strange place to test the idea that China is challenging components of the liberal international order as four of the five countries in the region – Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – are rated “not free” by Freedom House and one of them – Kyrgyzstan – is considered “partly free.” With all countries in the world facing a global capitalist economy, however, and countries of Central Asia engaged in market-based reforms, it is possible that some of them are receptive to aspects of Western liberalism and thus not necessarily least likely cases. Our purpose, however, is not simply to examine whether China’s BRI activities are upholding liberal values in Central Asia; it is to investigate the ways in which China’s own development model of state capitalism is finding expression in BRI participant government policies. Central Asia is good place to examine this because some of the countries that comprise it border China and the region is a springboard for China’s activities in greater Eurasia.

[Sino-Russian Geopolitical Cooperation in Eurasia: The Conjunction of the EAEU and the BRI \(Mher Sahakyan, China-Eurasia Council for Political and Strategic Research, Armenia\)](#)

The main objective of this research is to analyze the Sino-Russian geopolitical cooperation in Eurasia and its impact on the World Order. It provides an analysis of the main purposes of conjunction of the EAEU and the BRI by Moscow and Beijing, and reviews the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Union and the People’s Republic of China, which was signed on May 17, 2018. The position set forth in this study is that Washington’s economic and political pressure on Moscow and Beijing pushes these two powers closer; they, in turn, avoid conflict and rivalry, and focus on cooperation to buttress and withstand Washington’s heavy pressure. As they do, they stand as a powerful tandem, which is already changing the balance of powers in Eurasia in their favor.

Panel 11 Digital China

Chair: Mette Halskov Hansen (University of Oslo)

[A Governance Perspective on China's Digital Authoritarianism \(Monique Taylor, University of Helsinki\)](#)

Over the past decade China has rapidly built capacity in the area of “digital authoritarianism.” More specifically, China has developed effective strategies, institutions, and technologies to enable internet control for the purposes of censorship and surveillance, and to strengthen authoritarian governance through capture and analysis of big data. At the same time, China is promoting a new global internet norm termed “cyber sovereignty” (wangluo zhuquan), which is essentially an externalisation of domestic impulses. Enabling this norm is the immense capacity China has built domestically to manage and control the internet, which effectively restricts its operation to that of a government-run “intranet.” While commentators are scrambling to understand the implications of an alternative “control-driven” internet model for global internet governance, the domestic governance context has largely been ignored. Using theories of authoritarian institutions, this paper seeks to examine China’s approach to the internet and methods of implementation in terms of party-state institutions and policy processes in historical context. This institutional perspective will show how a relatively ad hoc and incoherent internet policy approach under the Hu-Wen administration was transformed into an assertive and comprehensive strategy under President Xi Jinping.

[China's Rise and the Countryside: ICT as Principal Actants in Techno-Scientific Visions for 'Building a Beautiful Countryside' \(Julia, Marincaccio, University of Bergen\)](#)

China’s rise is a political ambition whose realization hinges, first and foremost, on the Chinese party-state’s capacity to achieve its self-imposed goal of building a well-off, modern, and socialist society. The enhancement of rural livelihoods in terms of creating economic wealth and clean, unpolluted environments, captured in the ideological slogan ‘Building a Beautiful Countryside’, is a critical yardstick. At the heart of this political program lies a techno-scientific vision of political and academic elites that see in information and communication technologies (ICT) a pivotal instrument to finally fulfill the party’s historical claim of solving China’s rural problem. In this article I address the role of ICT in the Chinese government’s plan to curb environmental degradation in the countryside. Understanding digital environmental governance as a collective phenomenon in relational terms, I acknowledge technological devices as entities—or actants—in networks with individuals and ‘collective assemblages’ that have the capacity to initiate desired or preferred courses of social action. With a combination of qualitative content and frame analysis, I first identify the principal individual and collective entities that promote China’s techno-scientific vision to solve environmental problems in the countryside and then explore how ICT shape this vision. My analysis draws on party and government documents, academic articles, conference proceedings, and other elite publications that I collected in a systematic search in several Chinese databases. With this paper, I aim to contribute to current digital environmental governance debates and add new theoretical insights.

[Artificial Intelligence in Chinese Newsrooms \(Joanna Kuai, Karlstad University\)](#)

As part of China’s national strategy to become a global artificial intelligence (AI) superpower, how are Chinese newsrooms leveraging AI? This paper will give an overview of the state-of-art of journalism innovation in China. It also gives a brief account of the developing stages of Chinese newsrooms’ adoption of AI, the motivating forces behind it, the implications on journalism and society it has had, and how neighbouring nations and other global actors are reacting.

The paper is informed by my years of research on the topic. Through several field trips to China, I have conducted interviews with media professionals, market observers, engineers, developers, scholars, and educators. Additional data are acquired through media organizations' internal reference reports, publicly available documents and commercial database.

The research contributes to the understanding of how Chinese newsrooms are implementing journalism innovation in China's unique political and social context and add to the discussion of some common debates around China's rising tech platforms and their influences, power dynamics among states negotiated through media and everyday technology and issues surrounding global governance on AI.

By examining how AI is used in Chinese propaganda and censorship, it shows that the same technology can be used for with very different purposes to achieve the goals of different stakeholders. Analysis on China's increasingly powerful tech companies and its global expansion shows how Chinese companies are riding the wave of China's national strategy in developing AI to achieve the state's goal of being an AI superpower in a decade.

Panel 12 Democratic Movements & Protests

Chair: Dusica Ristivojevic (University of Helsinki)

'Unified and Centralised Leadership' under Xi Jinping: Implications for the International Role of the Pearl River Delta (Siv H. Oftedal, University of Oslo)

At the Communist Party Congress in 2017, a new official concept of leadership was introduced into the highest level of Chinese governance documents:

'Unified and Centralised Leadership' (集中统一领导). Being a concept of many connotations, it especially signals a double trend in Chinese politics: A transfer of power from 1) the government to the party, and 2) from the local to the central levels of governance. The second of these major developments is the main topic of this paper.

China's contact with the outside world has traditionally had an important meeting point in the far south of China – The Pearl River Delta. With open experimental zones for FDI and mass exports, frequent movement across borders, proximity to the financial hub of Hong Kong, and close contact with emigrants overseas, South China is a main gateway between China and the world.

However, much of this development has in the last forty years taken place based on a relative freedom for local governments to experiment according to local conditions. How have the dynamics between the local and central governance levels changed under Xi Jinping? What are the implications for the international role of South China?

In this paper I demonstrate that it is not only neighbouring states that need to constantly adapt politically to Beijing's sometimes back-and-forth changes, but also local governments within China's borders.

The Rise of Nationalism in China and Hong Kong: A Focus on Ethnicity and Gender (Sui-Ting Kong, Durham University; Petula Sik-Ying Ho, University of Hong Kong; Stevi Jackson, University of York)

The rise of China and its expansion of control in Hong Kong are responded by waves of social protests in the recent years: The denial of genuine universal suffrage and the introduction of the Extradition Law Bill (later withdrawn by the HKSAR government) triggered the Umbrella Movement in 2014 and the Anti-Extradition Law Bill protests in 2019. In response to government intransigence and aggressive policing in 2019, pro-democracy protests gradually became more confrontational resulting in the valorisation of 'valiant' protesters who were willing to do battle against the police. As the aims of the protests broadened, localist political ideas also gained greater traction. Young protesters called for 'a revolution of our times' and even full independence from China. In Hong Kong, enmity towards the Beijing regime has extended to include mainland Chinese individuals. During the protests sinophobic hate speech against Chinese people became ubiquitous and there were numerous reports of threats and physical assaults against individual mainlanders. When 'enemies' and 'traitors' are women – whether female pro-establishment figures, women police officers, wives of policemen or feminists arguing for a more inclusive ethic of care – abuse and harassment takes misogynist and often sexualized forms, such as rape threats. In this paper, we will unpack the bright side and the dark side of solidarity among Hong Kong protesters and argue that the pursuit of 'democracy' in the recent protest movement relies on and reproduces ethnic hierarchies and exclusionary criteria of belonging.

[Political Protests on Chinese Soil: Comparing Four Major Protest Events in Post-colonial Hong Kong \(Yun Tong TANG, University of Manchester\)](#)

The role of Hong Kong in shaping China's foreign and domestic policies has been increasingly apparent in recent years. Yet research on how protests in Hong Kong unfold and how the Chinese government manages dissenting voices in this semi-autonomous city is still sparse. My project examines four major protest events in Hong Kong from 2003 to 2019—the Anti-express rail campaign, the Anti-national education campaign, the Umbrella Movement, and the Anti-extradition law amendment protests—all of which set the Chinese government as one of their targets amid the rise of China since the 2000s. I aim to identify how different types of tactics shaped the trajectory of socio-political contentions and how various kinds of state responses were induced to mould the outcome of these conflicts. A dataset is built to reach down to the day-to-day timescale and take actors located at various scalar levels into consideration. It contains variables regarding major protest claims, the scale of conflicts, tactics used by activists, timing and duration of action, responses of the Hong Kong and Beijing governments, and so on. The project is exploratory and this paper presents some preliminary findings. Through the lens of contentious politics and by understanding the evolvement of tactical choices and interactive dynamics of the four cases, my project aims to shed some light on the changes in the nature of political regimes in post-colonial Hong Kong and identify the implications on the Hong Kong-China relations.

[‘One City, Two Attitudes: Hong Kong’s Legal Mobilisation in Response to China’s Influence’ \(Alvin Hoi-Chun HUNG, University of Oxford\)](#)

With the reversion of sovereignty to China in 1997, Hong Kong has been promised a ‘high degree of autonomy’ under the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ arrangement, which in principle Hong Kong shall preserve its capitalist system and way of life, and China’s socialist system and policies shall not be practised in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, China’s influence in Hong Kong has been growing continuously since 1997. As evidenced by events in recent years, China has gradually abandoned its policy of tolerance and instead through endogenously-driven and exogenously-driven processes, significantly tightened control over the ‘Special Administrative Region.’

In this paper with strong interdisciplinary flavour, I explore the modes of interpretive and adaptive ingenuity in which the citizens of Hong Kong resisted and cooperated with China’s rising influence since 1997 until today, via the concept of ‘legal mobilisation’. Theorised as the use of law in an explicit, self-conscious way through the invocation of formal institutional mechanism, ‘legal mobilisation’ provides a new perspective to understand ordinary Hong Kong citizens as legal actors, of both pro-democratic and pro-government views, that participate in contentious politics through their experience and interaction with the law.

Using rich empirical case studies that cover a large context of Hong Kong’s legal mobilisation practices, this paper illustrates China’s increased assertiveness in Hong Kong, and demonstrates how Hong Kong citizens of different political views have been responding to China’s influence with the mobilisation of legal resources: not only to challenge law and authorities, but also to actively collaborate with the regime.

[The Enemy of my Enemy is my Friend?: China’s Rise, Chinese Political Exiles, and Their International Allies \(Dusica Ristivojevic, University of Helsinki\)](#)

English-language media outlets and social networks were flooded with astounded voices when in August 2020 Chen Guangcheng, high-profile Chinese dissident assisted by Obama administration when escaping China, appeared as a speaker at the Republican National Convention supporting Donald Trump’s reelection. Chen Guangcheng was not alone: Wang Dan, Yu Jie, Cai Xia, Liao Yiwu, these are just some of the educated, critical to the Chinese regime’s abuses of human rights, politically active and influential figures of the Chinese diaspora who endorsed Donald Trump.

How did this happen? Is there a pattern discernable when we analyze the individual life paths of politically active Chinese exiles and their ensuing intellectual transformations? What does China's ever-increasing power in the global affairs has to do with it? These are some of the questions this paper will address. It will do so by analyzing the archival material, media sources and ethnographic notes resulted from a long-term observations and personal engagement with the Chinese civil society active at home and abroad.

The paper will approach Asia as a geopolitical entity defined by socio-political, ideological and affective relations of the actors placed both within and out of its material geographical borders. It will focus on post-1989 politically active Chinese diaspora, and argue that their activities has been embedded in a set of interconnected and overlapping networks formed by the sociopolitical actors, communities and institutions placed in Taiwan and Hong Kong; East and South-East Asia; and in the affluent countries of the West. China's rise, as this paper will further argue, is an unfolding background which has been inciting the critical engagement with the situation in China for this fraction of regionally and trans-nationally connected Chinese activists. At the same time, as it will be shown, the on-going global reconfigurations of geopolitical and symbolic power relations has been bringing together new and bringing closer old allies skeptical and opposed to China's global influence.

Panel 13 History, Literature and Sinology

Chair: Guowen Shang (University of Bergen)

Reinscribing The Inner Chamber: Song Lyrics on The Boudoir Theme by Ge Xiuying (1773-1791) (Shu LI, University of Uppsala)

As Dorothy Ko contends, there has been a deep-seated image of the victimized, passive and voiceless “feudal” women. As a May Fourth legacy, this image was on a larger part a combined product of an analytical confusion that confounds normative prescriptions with experienced realities, and of a lack of historical studies that examine women’s own views of their worlds (Ko, 1994). In 1957, Hu Wenkai 胡文楷’s *Women’s Writings Through The Ages 歷代婦女著作考* revealed the unprecedented literary phenomenon of women’s writing during the Ming and Qing dynasties. The astounding repertory of about 4000 individual collections and anthologies of women’s poetry makes for a vast realm of opportunities for not only literary studies, but also cultural, social and historical explorations based on the true voices of the women writers.

In previous studies on women’s song lyrics, employing the concept of negotiation first introduced into this field by Maureen Robertson, scholars such as Grace Fong and Kang-I Sun Chang consider women writers’ appropriation of the masculine style a gesture of negotiation and of rejecting the male-constructed poetic feminine. However, Fong also observes that the majority of the women writers in actuality adopted the feminine style when they wrote song lyrics (Fong, 1995). This paper aims to show that some women writers, such as Ge Xiuying 葛秀英 (1773-1791), still managed to negotiate with the conventional boudoir poetics and to assert their subjectivities, even when they adopted the feminine style.

Climate, Omens and Prognostication in 17th Century East China (Erling Agoey, University of Oslo)

In our written material from China’s Late Imperial period, information related to what we today would call “climate change” appears in various sources, and not least the local gazetteers 方志 (fangzhi). Here, we can study climate trends from the records of individual climate events, most typically disasters but also good years. Alternatively, we can survey what local sayings and traditions tells us about climatic conditions.

The presentation of climate events as “omens” for events and conditions in human society had its origin in what is called “correlative thinking.” According to this thinking, events in human society and in nature are linked together and thereby influence each other. But did the Late Imperial Chinese in fact see climate events as omens for political events and conditions? Which different views existed on the elite omen tradition and the farmers’ prognostications? And where can we find links between them?

In my paper, I explore this topic from the background of sources from or about the Jiangnan region of Eastern China in the 17th century; primarily gazetteers, but also histories and personal writings such as diaries. The time period was chosen as this was a key period in climate history, covering what were probably the coldest and climatically most unstable years for the last several thousand years. In turn, this period of colder weather was part of Little Ice Age, reflecting the cyclical natural climatic changes the world periodically experiences. The dynastic change from Ming to Qing also makes this period particularly interesting.

[The Imaginary Landscapes of Wei Yingwu's and Wang Wei's Poetry \(Tero Tähtinen, University of Tampere\)](#)

The classical Chinese nature poetry is commonly known for its concrete imagery and its tendency to evade mystical and non-realistic realms. As Pauline Yu and Theodore Hutters have stated, according to the Chinese tradition, literature is supposed to speak of the “things of this world”. However, this is a somewhat misleading simplification since many Chinese nature poets actually wrote poems in which the static and concrete landscapes succumb to more complex and uncertain depictions of nature. In my presentation, I discuss poems written by two eminent Tang dynasty poets, namely Wei Yingwu and Wang Wei, who wrote both traditional nature poems and poems in which concrete objects gives room for more imaginary and ambiguous ways of experiencing a landscape. First, I focus on poems where the landscape is created by the imagination of the speaker, and second, poems in which amorphous elements such as clouds and mist obscure the natural scene. Lastly, I talk about poems where the physical reality seems momentarily disappear altogether. Regarding the theoretical frame of reference, I utilize Liu Xie's ideas about writer's imagination as a fundamental creative impulse, which he puts forth in the 26th chapter of his seminal work *Wenxin diaolong*. By analyzing the chosen poems, I aspire to demonstrate that beyond the “things of this world”, there is yet another world and glimpses of it can be reached in subtle poetic evocations in Wei's and Wang's verses.

[Imagining Chinese Hegemony in Future History and Alternate History in Chinese Science Fiction \(Erik Mo WELIN, Uppsala University\)](#)

In recent years, Chinese science fiction has received increased attention from readers and scholars both in and outside of China. Moreover, as Mingwei Song has pointed out, the rise of Chinese science fiction is closely related to the Chinese modernization project and the discourse of China's Rise. However, Chinese science fiction has most often been approached through the concepts of utopia and dystopia. In my presentation, I take the different approach of applying the frameworks of future history, alternate history and the philosophy of history in order to analyze two texts which both imagine Chinese world hegemony, and which both were published in the early 2000s, not long after the discourse of “China's Rise” had emerged. More specifically, I will discuss how the texts, through employing narrative strategies inherent in their respective sub-genres, question and interrogate dominant historical narratives in China and the World, and thereby intervenes into the discourse of China's Rise. First, I will discuss how Han Song's *Red Star Over America* narrates a future history of Chinese world hegemony in order to question narratives of national rejuvenation, but also how the text subverts the American-centric notion of “the end of history”. Next, I will investigate how Liu Cixin creates a narrative of Chinese global hegemony in “*Western Ocean*” by employing the related but different form of the alternate history. Finally, I will discuss the ideological implications of both form and content of the two texts.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: Asian Public opinion on China in the age of COVID-19 & *Conclusion of the conference*

Moderator: Richard Turcsanyi (Palacky University Olomouc)

Panelists:

Kristina Kironska (Palacky University Olomouc)

Chih-Jou (Jay) Chen (Academia Sinica)

Julie Yu-Wen Chen (University of Helsinki)

Duncan McCargo (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies)

Jagannath Panda (Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses)

The role of perceptions in international relations has been long studied as part of various traditions and approaches, most popular among researchers and practitioners being soft power and public diplomacy, but also including symbolic power, normative power, discursive power and others. COVID-19 can be expected to influence views and attitudes towards China among Asian countries for years to come and it deserves future scholarly attention.

The suggested roundtable wants to serve as a platform of dialogue for scholars working with different sets of empirical data, methodological approaches, theoretical perspectives, and focus on various countries in Asia. We would like to take this opportunity and present our research project on public opinion on China that will have been conducted in 15 countries across Indo-Pacific region. The research – based on a large-scale representative online survey with more than 24000 respondents – will be administered in spring 2021 (www.sinofon.cz/surveys).

This data will contribute new insights and allow for comparisons with existing research such as that conducted as part of “Asian Barometer” project by National Taiwan University or ISEAS Singapore series of “State of Southeast Asia” offering insights into elite perceptions.

At the roundtable, we will explore why it matters what people think and why we need to care about public opinion. We will then look at predictors of Asian views on China and explore how contextual factors (including China’s domestic and foreign policies) interact with personal factors in Asian’s attitudes towards China.