

COVID-19: THE RISE OF CHINA AND SHIFT IN GLOBAL POWER STRUCTURE PERCEPTION OR REALITY

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ABSTRACT

The “Rise of China” became one of the core debating issues in international politics. Many expert opinions tend to argue that the power is in a shift from ‘west’ to ‘east’ under China as a great power. While the hegemony of U.S.A. is already challenged China, whose status has grown in the present century dramatically, took important positions on the global stage as a leader, exploiting the crisis of COVID-19 as it did during and after the 2008 financial crisis. The current scenarios and “decisive” policies of China suggest that it has placed itself as a world leader. Since 1990 the USA has enjoyed the monopoly being as the sole policeman in global politics. But during the last decade, the influence of the USA has decreased. China, on the other hand, has acquired most of the potential of hard power but of soft power also. The continuous global outreach under Xi in the last decade seemed to have confirmed the rising trend of China as a potential global power. The global standing of China under Xi and the American weakening position under Trump have been analyzed in this article. Though much of the scholars agreed on the rise of China this research argues whether a mere few indicators confirmed the rise of China as the next superpower or not. The main focus of the study is whether the rise of China as a global power to replace the US is a mere perception or reality by analyzing the debate about the rise of China.

Keywords: COVID 19, China, Global Power Structure

1. Review of existing literature on the balance of power and shifts in global politics

The global structure of world politics is dynamic and changing from time to time, therefore the status quo is challenged and the state then is no more a hegemon in world politics. The rise and fall of state occur regularly throughout the history of mankind. From the emergence of ancient Greece to the Consort of Europe to WWI and WWII, we have witnessed changes in and the demise of the world orders and a shift in the global power structure. The process is often not evident to decision-makers at first and then it is too late to save it (Haass, Jan-Feb 2019). In the 19th century, unified Germany and Japan rose, the Ottoman Empire and tsarist Russia declined and the UK and France grew stronger. In the 1930s, rival capitalist-led populist leaders and socialist-led populist leaders led the world. Both Germany and

Japan challenged world powers with a more active role and at last, the world order was changed dramatically. Now the time of pandemic has a deep resemblance and we are seeing the same events that caused WWI and WWII including; large wealth gaps among countries, division among countries which led countries to social and political conflicts, nationalism and populism, the rising world power (in the shape of China) challenging the over-extended hegemon (United States) (Dalio, 2020).

According to the Balance of Power theory, the rising power may pursue three types of strategy to claim its place as a global power; predatory, when the rising power is aggressive and powerful to push the declining power back to its fate. In this strategy, there are more possibilities for war. The second is, supportive of declining power it assists it as the US did after the First and Second World Wars. In this

strategy, the rising power claims its place as a global power more peacefully. The third one is a mixed strategy in which the rising power acts according to the given circumstances (Shifrinson, 2018). The rising power slowly and gradually gains more and more power over the declining's expense. It pursues aggressive policies but cooperates when the tension increases. The mixed strategy is more likely when the decliner has more military capabilities. It is pursued when the relative power of the rising power grows. Over time, eventually, the military threat of the declining power diminishes (Priebe, 2015). The strategy of China seems "mixed". History suggests that the rising powers don't "always" adopt an aggressive attitude toward their opponents or declining powers as the USA even assisted the declining powers, France and Britain after WWI. The balance of power realism remained relevant and fruitful in dealing with the interactions and relations among the powerful states. The rising power does not focus only on the declining one but it faces a lot of challenges. However, the declining power doesn't focus on the military to contain the rising one. Under this framework, rising China may not challenge or confront the USA's power and security positions around the world (Shifrinson, 2018). The transition may be peaceful as, the USA overpowered the UK after WWII when the rising power was satisfied with the existing order (Kim, 2016).

The challenger is a rising power "dissatisfied" with the global order but China, having stakes in the existing order, is satisfied with the existing order and wants to push the USA back slowly and gradually and take its place as a global power. It is also debated that the war is "certain" between the US and China as history suggests (Germany before WWI) but now neither China's stage is as much to confront the US nor the US is on a "declining" stage to wage the war with China as the balance of power realism argues (Shifrinson, 2018). Secondly, if the USA confronts or wants to engage with China militarily, China might step back as it is weak in its hard power capabilities from the USA. There is room for maneuver by political leaders of the declining hegemon and allies to escape from the war (Kim, 2016). Amid the pandemic, the accelerating power shift in China's favor would be peaceful within the existing system (Rap-Hooper, 2020). The liberal international order is "still" supported by China. While it is expected that the rising challenger, China, given its current position, would replace the

hegemon-USA. It will seek to continue the existing order from a new position of authority (Kupchan, 2014). Foreign Policy analysts, think tanks, scholars, and journalists embraced the idea that the global order is no more in a position as it was (Turkcan, 2020). International organizations, the backbone of the current order, have fundamental flaws (Magdin, oct-16-2019). WTO, for example, is facing a crisis in dispute resolution, and time and again it is accused of siding with China (World Trade Organisation in Trouble, 2019).

While at the Dawn of 2020 the biggest problem and challenge for the world, the COVID-19 pandemic will not only test multilateral organizations and their operational capacities but it's the values besides, political assumptions, that underpin it (Wintour, 2020). The institutions of the World order are unable to transform and address the new challenges, WHO, for example, is accused of mishandling the COVID-19 Pandemic. The world is in a state of uncertainty and the parameters, which govern current economic, political, military, and humanitarian processes, are in transition. The COVID-19 Pandemic is challenging the world order and paving the way for the retreat from multilateralism and collective cooperation, which are the main elements of the present world order (Turkcan, 2020). Respect for global rules is in decline and emerging tendencies of populism atomizing the international system (Lodhi, post-crisis global realities, 2020). The world order seems in crisis because; the USA's relative power is in decline, and China is rising to the global power position (Turkcan, 2020). The rise and fall of major powers determine the viability of the prevailing order. The USA, which has maintained a liberal world order, is in its step back from maintaining it (Haass, Jan-Feb 2019). The world is in rapid change and the US is no longer the world's singular player (Wang E., 2019). Its policies and actions (under the Trump administration, discussed later) look like a willing retreat (Rap-Hooper, 2020) Christopher Layne (2018) stated that the USA's primacy in military, economic, institutional, and soft power arenas is eroding (Layne, 2018). Moreover, China, as the fastest-rising power of any other power from 1870 to the present, (Kliman, 2014) is the greater challenger to US supremacy (Wang E., 2019). Many are glad of China's rapid economic rise in the span of a single generation (Subedi, 2019). The above study highlighted the overall shifts in the balance of power in international politics.

However, there is less attention on the debate about the contemporary rise of China. Most scholars and academics discuss the rise of China but there is limited focus on whether the rise of China is a reality or a perception. Therefore the current study will try to fill the gap about the perceptions and realities about the rise of China and the decline of the USA.

2. Research Methodology

The purpose of the research is to explore whether the shift in power structure from the West to the East is a myth or reality. It contributes to the existing literature on international politics. The main purpose of the study is to find the gap and address it in a very nuanced way. The current study is divided into three sections; the first sections deal with the rising potential of China in the last decade, especially after the rise of Xi to power. It analyses the US's declining role, especially under President Donald Trump and his policies. The second section is specifically devoted to the COVID-19 pandemic and the global outreach of China, in a very decisive way. The US's "defective" policies and actions have also been analyzed. Thirdly, the role of COVID-19 has been analyzed with its relation to the global power structure and power shift from "West" to "East".

3. Nature of the research and Data collections

The research is descriptive in nature. The study will highlight the historical overview of the balance of power. While analyzing the main question and debate about the rise of China and the decline of the USA, the main focus of this research is to examine the perceptions and realities of the rise of China as an emerging power. The data was collected via secondary sources such as articles, books, publications, official government records, daily reports of official online websites, and statements of the government leaders as well as their officials.

4. China's rise at the US expense:

China is growing through "selective engagement", "selective rejection", "selective accumulation and selective competition" (Marianne Schneder-Petsinger, Jue Wang, Yu Jie, James Crebtree, 2019). Scholars believe that the 21st century seems to be the "Chinese century" and China is a "serious" challenger and threat to the World order (Rengma). In the current situation, China's power continues to grow and now influencing institutions, societies, economies, and political systems of democracies

(Friedberg, 2018). The USA considers China as a "dynamic and formidable" global competitor it never faced in its history. With the fragmented response to China's growth in "scale, scope and capacity". Considering China's rapid growth and rapid overreach to the world, the Trump administration is afraid that as a "revisionist state" it would replace the US in the Asia Pacific and Asia as well due to its policies and projects in the region and Asia. This competition is driven by power politics as the gap between a hegemon and a rising power (Friedberg, 2018). The rising power weakened the rules-based international order and replaced it with still ambiguous (Tkacik, 2020).

The center of the world economy is shifting from west to east, for example, with the military ambitions of Russia and the economic rise of China (Turkcan, 2020). On the one hand, the US share in the global economy is declining and on the other China under Xi has stability and strength enhancing its global role. She is exporting new developmental models attracting other countries (Bishara, 2017). China aims to become an alternative economic power and reduce US economic and technological dominance in the market (Anton, 2020) Rapidly rising China will overpower the USA eventually (Kim, 2016). In 2020, the USA and China will be the top two in the world GDP ranking. On nominal (GDP) bases US is ahead of China having led by \$7.05 trillion while on PPP bases China is ahead of the USA by \$7.15 trillion and will remain the world's largest economy in PPP. The gap in nominal is lessening as in 2020, China's GDP growth is about 5.82% and the USA's is 2.09%. (IMF).

With a debt of about, 24 trillion dollars the US is a declining hegemon and is unwilling (and unable) to carry the burden of hegemony, as it is going back from its military bases around the world (Tkacik, 2020). On the other hand, the fastest-rising power, China increased its GDP and world trade more rapidly than any other rising power in recent history (Kliman, 2014). China is a formidable economic and military competitor. She is creating massive wealth, as it is the world's "leading factory" possessing unprecedented trade surpluses with double-digit growth in the last three decades (Bishara, 2017). Chinese leaders intend to use their economic influence, soft power, and sharp power to reshape Asian and global order. Both sides consider that time is on their side but China is better in the bet. China is starting from its neighbors to reshape the

international environment. (Friedberg, 2018) It seems that Asia is decoupling from the US, the Asian economy is restarting with intra-Asian trade, and a shift is occurring in the supply chain to Asia (Goldman, 11 May 2020).

Though the above literature has discussed more on the rise of China. But they didn't highlight the overall role of China other than economic, and military, development. Therefore the study will analyze the factors based on reality and perception that either China will replace the world order or it is merely a debate among various scholars, and think tanks. China seeks to become the rule maker of the international system. Due to China's economic rise under Xi, she is increasing its structural power, to control political and economic institutions and maintain command over technological knowledge and means of communication through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to change the dynamics of global order (Anton, 2020). If the USA's friends and allies sign up to China-made rules, a shift of power and leadership is inevitable in China (Rap-Hooper, 2020). Beijing is trying to make its institutions for dispute resolution and global governance. China's BRI courts, the Xian court for land routes, and Shenzhen court for sea routes under the People's Court of China, for dispute resolution among investors, in BRI, raise suspicions of China's global ambitions. (O.Wolf, 2019) Its domain may grow to include more and more states to BRI and this is a challenge to the US-led World Order. China is writing new rules and its implications for US interests and World order will be profound. Under BRI China cast itself as "lender and builder" but with courts, it will be a "judge and jury" (Hillman, 2018).

China has expressed its willingness for regional order. It has demanded a greater role in the IMF and World Bank and the potential use of its currency, Yuan (Kim, 2016). On the other hand, the groundwork for regional economic order has already begun with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), China, and the New Development Bank (Hugens, 2017). China is developing a financial system that will avoid a dollar-based payment mechanism and American sanctions, (The New Cold War, may-09-2020) in response to the existing International Monetary Order, which they believe disadvantaged China and developing countries.

Secondly, China under BRI is establishing financial institutions like the Silk Road Fund, International Commercial Courts in Singapore, and AIIB as an alternative to rearrange the international financial system. Successful BRI would manifest China's position to decide terms and conditions for the international financial system (O.Wolf, 2019).

5. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):

China invested a 4 trillion-dollar initiative to be expanded to 70 countries on land and sea routes which reflects "China's dream" to be realized in 2049 on the anniversary of the communist revolution in China of 1949. It was introduced by Xi in 2013. Alongside economic and political aims it is described as promoting "people-to-people" and cultural exchange among different nations (Sarwar, 2018). BRI carries "goods and ideas" and can be used as an instrument for influence around the world. (Khattak, 2016)

BRI serves as the instrument of Sinicization the process of making the world suitable to Chinese and China. (O.Wolf, 2019), and is described as a vehicle of "soft power" (Albert, 2018) and will influence billions of people around the world (Mehmood Hussain and Ahmed Bux Jamali, 2019). It has strategic implications, beyond economics, on the regional balance of power. China is expanding its outreach to other regions through BRI (Javed, 2019) it would control Eurasia, Central Asia, Europe, and the Middle East on land and the Indian Gulf, South China Sea, and the Mediterranean on water (Friedberg, 2018). The regional countries under BRI (if succeeded) would not lean toward liberal democracy and fell into the Western camp and would give chance to China to realize the second BRI vision of farm "community of common destiny" of the regional states (Marianne Schneder-Petsinger, Jue Wang, Yu Jie, James Crabtree, 2019). BRI is a geopolitical challenge to US supremacy which is believed to "juvenile" China and realize Xi's "China's dream". It would likely reshape political and global order and redefine regional dynamics, including China's global role under rules set through BRI (Sarwar, 2018). BRI would have several implications for (US built) World Order (O.Wolf, 2019) the paradigm shift is likely to occur in the coming decades centered on BRI which is significant for China to establish global power (Marianne Schneder-Petsinger, Jue Wang, Yu Jie, James Crabtree, 2019).BRI, wielding Soft Power,

advancing its global standing. China is the third attractive destination for students and positions in the world ranking of universities and sports around the world. Tourism may also boost the Chinese image as 138 million people visited China in 2016 (Biswas, 2018). The rise of China's "comprehensive national power", the combination of "hard" and "soft power" would deeply affect the balance of power (Subedi, 2019) and it also consistently increases confidence in Chinese leadership (Kejin, 2015).

6. The rise of China in term of soft power is this an indicator towards the decline of the USA?

The term Soft Power coined by American political scientist in 1990, Joseph Nye which rests on the attraction of a country. The competition is not only on "who's army wins but whose story wins" (Nye J., 2018) the competition is now for the international community's heart and mind (Sam Bresnick, Paul Haenle, 2020). Power, both soft and hard, plays an important role in maintaining hegemony (Hugens, 2017). Soft power rests on the attraction of countries rather than coercion. Its main sources are the culture of a country, political values, and a country's internal and external policies. How the government behaves at home i.e. protecting press freedom, how it behaves toward international institutions i.e. multiculturalism and consulting other nations, and foreign policy (promoting development) are the things that matter the most for soft power, and in all these Trump is in reverse gear (Nye, 2019).

The USA's soft power declined since the end of the Cold War, especially after the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the 2008 financial crisis (Bishara, 2017). US soft power is based on popular culture (reducing according to Nye) Media, Cinemas, Hi-tech, US way of life and political structures, seducing elites of other (mostly) developing countries to speak and write on the US's behalf and its education system. Now China is developing strategies to extend its influence and soft power abroad (Subedi, 2019) In addition, the US is in most of these (except private sources) in decline due to Trump's policies (Nye J., 2018). To Joseph Nye arrogance, self-interest and indifference to other countries harms soft power (Nye J., 2018). US seeks self-interest and would no longer be seen as an international leader (S.M. Walt, et al, 2020). US's bullying and the West's self-righteousness are pushing some developing nations away from the West (Subedi, 2019). The soft power vacuum created by the Trump administration was

inevitably filled by China. According to Pew Research, most countries agree China's influence in the world has grown markedly. Young people tend to have a more positive stance on China in Brazil for example 67% of younger have a favorable view of China as Pew surveyed about 34 countries (Laura Silver, Kat Delvin, and Christine Huang, 2019). It will remain a key objective of Chinese Foreign Policy (Biswas, 2018). Besides, it is significantly relevant to its rising power (Rengma). China's soft power has been an increase in its economic and political heft (comprehensive national power) in the world. Surviving the global financial crises (2008) was the most prominent soft power projection (Subedi, 2019). China is considered the world as a holder of soft power with a global agenda of peaceful rise (Warraich, 2019). Soft power wants to acquire networks of friends and allies to achieve great power status (Rengma). She has created a soft power effect by earning respect for its conduct and managing to elevate its global position (Lodhi, 2020).

The soft power of China is improving all over the world (Nadeem, 2017) China's primary concern is to sway world public opinion. (Jehan-Robert, 2015) As China expands its influence abroad the US influence would be at risk (RENJART, 2020). The concept of soft power was officially adopted by China under Xi Jinping and seems as the primary constituent of its power matrix (Rengma). Xi in 2014 said "We should increase Chinese soft power, give good Chinese narratives, and better communicate Chinese message to the world" (Albert, 2018). Culture, economic assistance, and economic and infrastructural development abroad are the main sources of China's soft power (Rengma) The 5G (internet) is another source that played a vital role in China's soft power and public diplomacy in the 20th century and it will also work as a catalyst in China's economic and social growth (Kant, 2020). With economic assistance as a win-win strategy, Media like Xinhua TV and construction abroad as BRI (CPEC) boost its Soft Power. Grants, interest-free concessional loans, and Aid programs, without conditionality and predominantly bilateral, of south-south partnership for the developing world, Training programs, promoting the Chinese language, the educational exchange also contribute to its soft power (Jehan-Robert, 2015) China respects the ideologies of other nations, as they do not celebrate Pig year in Muslim countries (Warraich, 2019). China's Principle of non-interference and respect for other countries are

the permanent sources of its attractiveness and growing influence. The attractiveness of China in the developing world is a threat to the US-led/built world order (Subedi, 2019). Chinese culture is the most important element of its soft power, which Nye, who coined the word, considers as an important source of soft power. China, established Confucius Institutes around the world to build strong relations and reduce cultural gaps (Rengma). Regional organizations are important networks for soft power. For China, soft power is important to be strengthened in the SAARC region. The Confucius Institutes (CIs) in Pakistan, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, etc. are the pieces of evidence of this approach (Rengma). The Chinese soft power in the region is likely to grow (B.M.Jain, 2018) Training future bureaucrats political leaders and elites is important for soft power, winning hearts and minds remain an important component of the Chinese education system (Mehmood Hussain and Ahmed Bux Jamali, 2019). Chinese diaspora propagates and popularizes Chinese soft power as a means to increase China's global influence. Providing research fellowships, people to people contacts, economic packages, and building cultural links linkage with think tanks outside the country. Chinese rulers use Confucianism as a psychological tool to strengthen their grip on society and convince the world of its peaceful rise and as a stabilizing force in world politics (B.M.Jain, 2018). China is advancing its soft power at the US expense (Miere, 2020). The Image of US leadership continues to suffer abroad and Chinese leadership gaining more power. Moreover, people admire China's leadership because the US leadership declined. In Pakistan it has the highest marks, 73 per cent. PEW. Superpower uses consciously hard and soft power and the USA under Trump is odd to use it (Subedi, 2019). US Foreign Policy is neither seductive nor appealing to other countries (Subedi, 2019). Mistaken policies reduced the attractiveness of US's greatest sources of soft power, and the openness of its democratic processes, which may recover after Trump (Nye J., 2018). Trump's policies, domestic and abroad declined US soft power (Nye, 2019) as He halted US funds for WHO over "coronavirus" failure during the global pandemic for which he was condemned as putting lives at risk and cut of foreign aid, which will make the US likely insecure abroad (staff, 2020).

7. The crises in US leadership and towards weak Alliance system:

According to Carlo Norrlf and Simon, Reich's leadership plays an important role in maintaining hegemony (Kim, 2016). Trump is a narcissist, emotional child (Tkacik, 2020) Under the Trump administration the US is losing its global power "in a fit of absence of mind" (Boot, 2018). Under the Trump administration the USA seems to have retreated from its global leadership and China under Xi, with his multiculturalism, will fill the vacuum created by Trump's "America First" and his "isolationist stance" (Biswas, 2018) trust on the US is waning under Trump as the US does not help its own allies and China is helping countries around the world (Morten Soendergaard Larsen and Robbie Gramer, 2020). With Trump's rhetorical attacks on other countries and "ignorance and malice," he is losing US influence abroad, acquired by his predecessors, and the US is more unpopular than ever before. Trump is turning off its allies as no one they do not want to assist the US anymore as he is repulsing and repelling them from the US and dealing with leaders of democracies like "dirt" (Boot, 2018) He is the first American president who questions the relevancy of an alliance system (Turkcan, 2020). Trump's behavior irritated Washington's close allies (Sattar, 2020). The relations of the US becoming strain with allies (Biswas, 2018) US under Trump is inflaming allies by embracing "me first" approach with little care for World Order as Trump threatened to veto Germany's resolution sought to combat rape as a weapon of war and US's shift in Cuban policy which angered European allies (Wang E., 2019).

US inflicted pain by repeatedly denouncing NATO allies as they resisted US requests to reject Huawei 5G technology of China, the greater challenger to US supremacy. Allies are losing "faith and hedge" and the erosion of Allies' trust in America could lead them to other powers (Wang E., 2019). Angela Markel questioned allies' trust on the U.S. to date U.S. has found little support against China (Rapp-Hooper, 2020) Trump is more harmful to world order than China because he questions multicultural institutions, he criticizes NATO, and questions it benefits for Americans (Turkcan, 2020). Trump could pull out America from NATO in the second term (Wright T., 2020). Trump is engaged in the coercion of allies he is stating that the U.S. will leave them if they do not bear the burden of NATO (Rapp-

Hooper, 2020). Trump's amateurish and reckless presidency is undermining US leadership. Because of his protectionism and populist nationalism. His rejection of the Paris treaty on Climate Change, (Bishara, 2017) withdrawal from the Transpacific Partnership (TPP), which is a self-inflicted wound for the US as it was likely to influence 21st-century trade rules (Petsinger, 2019), change in trade, stances on environment, immigration policies are the indications of US exit from global leadership role (Sarwar, 2018) Trump's behavior is destructive towards the alliance system. The alliance system was important to eliminate the chances of wars and it lowered the military and political burden of the US. The US need allies to contain rising China (Rapp-Hooper, 2020) Alliance system gives protection to other democracies from the shadow of Chinese influence. Without the U.S., these countries will never hold the line against China (Wright T., 2020). Alone America cannot hope to match China economically and militarily (Rap-Hooper, 2020). "destructing alliance structures" and harming the US international position which will give way for China to be a global power as it is assisting other countries, particularly European in times of crisis to rebalance the international system (Sam Bresnick, Paul Haenle, 2020). Some European nations are welcoming China (Morten Soendergaard Larsen and Robbie Gramer, 2020) and coalition against China seems difficult with Trump's dubious actions and rhetoric to be a relied ally (Petsinger, 2019). Debate on the demise of the world order begun much before Trump (Turkcan, 2020). The US is in partial retreat, focused on domestic issues, the retreat is not surprising as it has begun with the Obama administration and accelerated during (and due to) Trump's administration (Magdin, oct-16-2019). The behavior of Trump administration raises questions of the US sacrificing long-term priority to counter China and Russia (Wang E., 2019). Trump is ending Pax Americana and helping either to usher in the Chinese century or leave the world in disorder (Boot, 2018). Trump administration is in competition not only for global supremacy but also for the international community's "heart and mind" and Trump is failing to cooperate with other countries (Sam Bresnick, Paul Haenle, 2020). He has focused on "hard power" and does not realize that the US maintained its global power and position largely on "soft power" (Boot, 2018) in which the US is in retreat (Biswas, 2018) Gallup explored US

favorability dropped 20 points after Obama as 30 percent people had a favorable view of US in 2018 (Nye j., 2018). During the pandemic, China is bolstering its soft power (Miere, 2020). Trump administration presented a strategic opportunity to China which is weakening the US's reputation and global leadership. Chinese officials and observers believe that this is an opportunity to boost China's standing globally and would prefer Trump to win again (Sam Bresnick, Paul Haenle, 2020). If Trump reelected institutions, trust in and "soft power" of the US be eroded (Nye, 2019). If Trump is reelected recovery, of the US's power, is impossible and each country will go their way (Wright, 2020) China was happy over Trump's presidential victory (Bishara, 2017).

8. COVID 19 (Corona Virus) and implications for the great nations:

Historically, last global pandemic, "The Spanish flu" of 1918, is not regarded as a driver of domestic and international politics likely because the world was already broken due to WWI and less integrated and interdependent than now. Pandemics and other acts of nature sometimes have been important contributors to these seismic shifts and altering world orders (Dalio, 2020) Never before has a single event affected everyone's lives so rapidly. The longer the pandemic the more the world will change (Wright, 2020). UN estimated that half a billion people would vanish by the end of the year largely due to the pandemic (Sattar, 2020). When COVID-19 is over, Henry Kissinger stated, many countries and institutions will be perceived failed and their economic and political upheavals will lose for generations" and will forever alter the world order (Kissinger, 2020). Covid-19 is the greatest global crisis in this century. As each crisis could provide a seismic shock that permanently changes the international system and balance of power as we know that (S.M. Walt, et al, 2020). Everything is under debate from trade-offs between health and the economy to, the fragilities of globalism, the future of the EU, and the advantages of authoritarianism (Wintour, 2020). The coronavirus pandemic is a world-shattering event and its far-reaching consequences we now only imagine. As it shatters lives, economies, competence, and incompetence of governments, it will lead to a permanent shift in political and economic power in a way we will see later. It will change the world forever. China and the

USA entered the era of great power competition over the next world order (Rap-Hooper, 2020). Response to the pandemic deciding and shifting balance of power between China and the West. In the court of world public opinion systems, ideologies, leaders, and power blocs are stress-tested. Henry Kissinger said leaders have to prepare themselves for the post-coronavirus world order. The discussion among global think tanks is not about cooperation to contain or defeat the global pandemic, but about the question that who will be the leader of the post-corona world order (Wintour, 2020). The COVID-19 Pandemic will pose a challenge to the liberal world order (Turkcan, 2020). After the COVID-19 pandemic, the US-built global system will be at risk of losing credibility (Sam Bresnick, Paul Haenle, 2020). As a leading power of the world order, the USA's inability and unwillingness to lead the world during the pandemic have revealed a shifting balance of power (Turkcan, 2020). If the world order is upended it will not be the product of the pandemic alone but of forces of long before. Including American Foreign Policy, which preferred confrontation with China and disengaged with global leadership. To China's fortune, American policies are anti-multicultural institutions, aggressiveness in trade, and defined and limited national security (Rap-Hooper, 2020). The coronavirus would accelerate the shift of power and influence from west to east. South Korea and Singapore initially responded very well and managed well after the initial shocks. The response of Europe and the US has been very skeptical, which will likely weaken the Western "brand" (Wintour, 2020). Authoritarianism is not a better to respond, as the countries, that initially responded well, are democracies (Wintour, 2020). The COVID-19 Pandemic would reorder the world to China's advantage (Rap-Hooper, 2020). The behavior of the Trump administration raises questions about whether the US is sacrificing long-term priority to counter China and Russia (Wang E., 2019). Trump is ending Pax Americana and helping either to usher in the Chinese century or leave the world in disorder (Boot, 2018). The Suez crisis, in 1956, symbolized the ultimate decay of the global power of the UK the Coronavirus marked the "Suez moment" of the USA (Wintour, 2020). The US will no longer be an international leader. Because of its self-interest and incompetence (S.M. Walt, et al, 2020). US leadership of the world order is in doubt and reversed (Bishara, 2017).

There is a crisis of confidence in the West amid the COVID-19 pandemic and China doesn't want to waste time exploiting the dual crises of the pandemic and confidence (Miere, 2020). China is gaining credibility in its march to global power status (Sam Bresnick, Paul Haenle, 2020). US's internal crisis and response hampered its global role, as it used the well-established alliance system and resources to collectively respond in its leadership in times of crisis. A vacuum of leadership was created during the pandemic, which was filled by China as she framed herself as the savior of human dignity and life (Miere, 2020). The lack of leadership provided an opportunity for China. She has grown influence by assisting around the world (Turkcan, 2020). China waits to challenge American leadership in times of crisis (Kim, 2016). China has deftly positioned itself as the culprit to the savior of the world (Wintour, 2020). It is enhancing the position of global leadership through aid and assistance and positioning itself as the guarantor of the global public good (Sam Bresnick, Paul Haenle, 2020). China is seizing the chance to portray itself as a global power and trying to establish itself as the hero of human lives, which is saving people internally and around the world. It sent PPEs, medical supplies, and Chinese doctors worldwide (Morten Soendergaard Larsen and Robbie Gramer, 2020). Chinese leaders are acting and stepping aggressively and decisively chipping away at US influence and going to rebalance the global balance of power (Sam Bresnick, Paul Haenle, 2020). China is pursuing a great power position in a time of crisis through "mask-diplomacy" with certain success. The US has failed to work with allies and adversaries to give incredible response to a health emergency. The US has a shortage, China is distributing medical equipment to reward allies and squeeze rivals (Bowie, 2020). If America remains in "America first" mode and China continues to help others, the USA's partners will perceive China's leadership as strengthened (Rap-Hooper, 2020) The pandemic is turning to competition for global leadership between liberal and illiberal states and the country, which effectively managed the social distress and economic blows, would gain traction. (Wintour, 2020). Illiberal powers are gaining space (Boot, 2018). Both society and the international system will be decided by our actions and policies during the crisis (Wright, 2020). The victor in the pandemic and of the pandemic will write history. Inevitably those who, preserve the

virtue of their political-economic system will claim success from those who experienced different and devastating outcomes. Some democracies triumph over other authoritarianism (S.M. Walt, et al, 2020). The Spanish PM called China, for example, for help not the US first as Spain is its NATO ally and has the US's largest naval base. The events demonstrate that a Remarkable shift is occurring in international affairs. A pandemic would catalyze a gradual shift in world politics underway for the last 30 years as China is influencing the US-built World order (Miere, 2020). COVID-19 shows USA IS failing to adjust its strategy in this new world. Besides, if the US prevails in great power it cannot protect its security alone (S.M. Walt, et al, 2020). Many argue that China replaced the US as the leader of the international response to the pandemic (Wright, 2020). Washington has failed the leadership test and the world is worse off for it (S.M. Walt, et al, 2020). The world is losing the "remaining" confidence in the ability of the US to take charge. The American response is limited to renaming the pandemic as "Kung Flu" or Wuhan Virus (Wright, 2020). US response to the crisis is widely viewed as inept not only domestically but also internationally. His response sown crucial doubts about its leadership (Bowie, 2020). China's comparatively satisfactory response its success in battling Corona and its outreach to poor nations will allow China to fill the US's boots (Kant, 2020).

The hegemon to maintain the world order has to provide benefits to those under its influence (Hugens, 2017). The pandemic is not the only time that a vacuum of global leadership and US retreat felt around the world. Trump hates compromise, necessary for the coalition of states, as the Group of Seven, states close allies of the US didn't give a joint statement over coronavirus as an official of the Trump administration termed the Coronavirus as "Wuhan Virus" (Miere, 2020). US's woeful response exacerbated the already strained relationship with Europe. Trump announced travel restrictions on Europe during the pandemic, which surprised European leaders (Morten Soendergaard Larsen and Robbie Gramer, 2020). China's containment of the coronavirus with the help of the 5G, surveillance system, demonstrates how effective the Chinese system has become. Amidst COVID-19, pandemic China is advertising its system of governance (Kant, 2020). The US is in doubt as China under Xi is going to improve China's image

abroad and strive to demonstrate its global leadership and "favorably" compare its system with that of the US. China is casting the capabilities of its system i.e. authoritarianism and collectivism (Miere, 2020). The long crisis exposes governments' competency (Wright, 2020). For the US it is a disaster and has more cases than any other country. Trump is ill-equipped to act. If prolonged financial losses will be in trillions of dollars (Wright, 2020). China is in the lead and having a unique position amid corona and there is a strong indication that China will recover economically at V- shape. The US may slip into recession for at least two quarters (IMF said), (Kant, 2020). Unemployment hit record levels in the USA. Its budget deficit to exceed \$3.8 trillion this year. The US economy is estimated to contract by -6 percent and China's will grow by 1 percent. The dollar's confidence as a reserve currency is in decline (Farooq, 2020). The US is in a "clash of systems" competition (Rap-Hooper, 2020). South Korean philosopher Byung-Chul Han has argued in his essay, *El Pais*, that the victors are Asian states like Japan, Korea, China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, with "authoritarian mentality comes from Confucianism" and "China will display the superiority of its system more proudly" and to sell its "digital police state" as a model of success (Wintour, 2020). Both sides threaten each other because of not only what they do but also what they are (Wright T., 2020). To some scholars, china's system is "responsive", "flexible", "resilient" and exceptional which faces internal and external challenges and takes the world by "stealth" (Subedi, 2019). China, during the pandemic, gave an alternative system to the world (Nagi, 2020). Her system survived the financial crisis of 2008 (Miere, 2020) which gave the "China Model" of development to the world (Subedi, 2019) and increased China's reputation and strength drastically. The global pandemic is another chance, that China will exploit as China's leadership feels confident in its system and its appeal to the world (Sam Bresnick, Paul Haenle, 2020).

The pandemic will not only multilateral organizations and their operational capacities but also the values and political assumptions, that underpin them (Wintour, 2020). The declining respect for global rules and populism atomizing the international system (Lodhi, post-crisis global realities, 2020). In his long antipathy towards multilateral organizations under Trump, the US is in "America first" mode (Biswas, 2018). It denounced

NATO members, withdrew from the Transpacific Partnership, changed trade and immigration policies, (Sarwar, 2018) departed from the Paris Climate Accord (Smith, 2020), and defied established norms as evidenced by Trump's wrangle with WHO. From acts like these International institutions and multiculturalism face challenges and are under extreme stress (Lodhi, Post-Crisis Global Realities, 2020). Doubts about US reliability multiplied under Trump, due to its withdrawal from numerous pacts and conditional approach to alliances in Asia and the EU (Haass, JAN-Feb 2019). TPP, for example, a multilateral trade pact designed by Obama's administration, is believed to exclude China from the US-centric order (Bowie, 2020).

The financial crisis of 2008, exposed the fault lines of the global financial system, an important component of the globalized world (Sattar, 2020). It indicated the USA's decline, as she was unable to provide economic stability to the world (Layne, 2018). If the Pandemic remains and causes worldwide recession and America does not manage international recovery efforts, economic and political power will shift to Beijing (Rap-Hooper, 2020). There is no candidate today except China. To reduce the gap in economic capacities China will be able to seek superpower status (Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wolforth, 2016).

Some argue that the pandemic could end globalization if prolonged (Wright, 2020). Globalization has in destabilizing effect (Haass, Jan-Feb 2019). A pandemic could be the straw that breaks the camels' back of economic globalization (Niblett, 2020). The US population has lost faith in globalization and international trade. It will accelerate the change which had already begun, a move away from "US-centric globalization to China-centric globalization" (S.M. Walt, et al, 2020) Recent pandemic has exposed this system. Globalization has turned into a curse (Sattar, 2020). There is less trust between two states, the US and China, than at any time since 1979, the normalization of relations (America v China Superpowered Insult, may-09-2020). Pew poll has shown, conducted in March 2020, that 66% of Americans have an unfavorable view of China. Highest since Pew began to ask (Yusuf, 2020). The dominant view in America is that China is fundamentally hostile to the USA, steal US intellectual property, and destroy jobs in the race to get ahead. China sees the US as a declining power, which resorted to bullying. Domestic politics

in both countries intensify animosity. China believes that the virus came from the US and the US blames China for the catastrophe (The New Cold War, may-09-2020). Trump's tariffs create conflicts (Murtaza, 2020). Although the crisis will contribute to US-China, tension (S.M. Walt, et al, 2020).

Some argue that conflicts will occur after the crisis (S.M. Walt, et al, 2020) and fear that the crisis will lead to a world war and the situation deeply resembles that of WWI. The causes, among others, were nationalism, the declining power of the hegemon and rising challenger, and inept leadership (Tkacik, 2020). Before war, there must be friction between potential challenger and hegemon. The hegemon wants the status quo and the challenger seeks a better position (Hugens, 2017). The growing economy and military of China had already provoked the US to decouple China (Niblett, 2020). Resorts to populism and nationalism might trigger the situation. China has recently established two research centers in the contested South China Sea and launched the maritime law-enforcement campaign "Blue Sea 2020" which may increase the chances of confrontation (Kant, 2020). While predicting the "transition war" is immature. The war would not occur, the rising challenger benefited from the existing "liberal hegemonic order" and it would seek to rise under the existing order and replace the hegemon (Kupchan, 2014). China has gained an important position in global multilateral institutions in the last few years (Sam Bresnick, Paul Haenle, 2020). It is rightly argued that the Pandemic will promote peace because; first, states have no confidence in rapid and decisive victory and second economic situation of countries and public opinion will not allow for confrontation and war (Walt, 2020). Governments are struggling with double-digit unemployment, recessions, and depression, lessening revenues and more expenditures, and mounting debts (Wright, 2020) Dependencies, multilateral intuitions, embedded nature of states to economic and political institutions make the world order sustaining (Turkcan, 2020). Neoliberalism poured trillions into China, hurting China is hurting itself for the US (Murtaza, 2020). China in its interest supports the world order. China's support for the global economic system is more active, as it played a stabilizing and supportive role in the 2008 financial crisis. With economic interdependence, the war of transition is unlikely to occur (Kim, 2016) The pandemic seems as a catalyst to push the US back

and an opportunity for China to be the global power but at the time the nature of both countries seems in transition and one cannot predict the ultimate result of their statuses. However, this is certain that China slowly and gradually pushed the US back to surrender or react violently. But given the situation, it would not occur because not only China, given its current position, wants to provoke and confront America but America, under its internal crisis and external position, also doesn't want to react violently. Secondly, to adopt a predatory strategy China didn't, for example, increase its military expenditure from 1.9% of its GDP since 2009. Thirdly, it does not make a defense alliance to strike the decliner and wage the war (Shifrinson, 2018).

Conclusion

The above study shows some of the changing patterns in the intentional power shift. But still, there are certain ambiguities over the debate of the rise of China as the next emerging power of the world. The hegemony of the USA though is challenged by economic interdependency. On the other hand, Chinese influence is increasing only in terms of the economy rather than the hegemon. Although currently China can't be justified merely on economic development. There are internal and external challenges. The control political system undermines and creates doubts. Fostering innovation, dealing with the population in terms of aging and shortage of labor force, and coping with a global environment, corruption, and skepticism of a more powerful People's Republic. Whereas is, on the other hand, there is less tendency of global support to become the next global power. While the USA still has the upper hand in Global politics. There is no doubt that today China's influence is growing especially in the Asian region. It plays a big role in influencing the politics of Asia, but on a global scale, its influence is not as high as the United States and other superpowers that dominated the world

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