



Double-Masters degree in China and International Relations

Master thesis

**Why Does the Global Security Initiative Could Be Seen as a Potential Way to
Achieve a Chinese World Order?**

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Abstract

This master thesis delves into the potential of the Global Security Initiative (GSI) as a means for China to establish a world order that aligns with its cultural values, national identity, and strategic interests. The study employs three theoretical perspectives, namely the “All Under Heaven theory” within culturalist theory, constructivism, and moral realism, to provide a multifaceted analysis of the GSI. Using the peace plan presented by China for the ongoing Ukraine-Russia conflict as a case study, the thesis explores how China's pursuit of a stable and peaceful world order through the GSI may be interpreted through the lens of these theoretical frameworks.

Through the all under heaven theory, the study reveals how China's cultural values and identity as a peaceful nation inform the GSI's principles of mutual respect, openness, inclusion, and win-win cooperation. From a constructivist perspective, the thesis highlights the role of shared norms and ideas in shaping the international system and how China's promotion of the GSI as a framework for global security governance may help establish new norms and practices, while also transforming its identity in the international scene. The study also considers the moral realist perspective, which emphasizes the importance of pursuing self-interest in a way that contributes to the common good and respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states.

As a whole, the GSI suggests a viable ways for China to construct a world order that matches its cultural values, national identity, and strategic interests, according to this study. The GSI provides a framework for China to establish alliances with other nations and portray a favorable image of itself on the global arena by promoting the concepts of mutual respect, openness, inclusiveness, and win-win cooperation. The case study of Ukraine's peace plan indicates how the GSI may be used to address conflicts and encourage peaceful resolution of problems.

Keywords: China; Chinese world order; All Under Heaven theory; Moral realism; 12-point peace plan in Ukraine.

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1.0 Introduction

As life is becoming more and more difficult, the line between security and insecurity gets more tenuous by the day. In fact, what I just said isn't entirely right, but unfortunately, it isn't entirely wrong either. The world as we know today has become a place where we thought we could at least coexist without the threat of war. Technologies, commerce, globalization in general would intertwine human beings to the point where we could see our differences dissipated in what would become a space for everyone to live together and somewhat peacefully. During the association of countries that were former to the Soviet Union, the European project got to know that not everyone can develop at the same rate, symbolizing the term "a Europe at different speeds", and Hobbes would firmly say that this naïve vision that the human being can be good naturally is just an illusion.

In a world where in some places the recent "cold war" didn't end, in a world where war seems to be the easiest mean to achieve one's goals, we humans, lack of what a Portuguese political scientist would call "projetistas da paz" or "designers of peace". In fact, this world that I so much speak about, has never been as so connected as today. When Columbus first stood in what was called at the time "the new world", it's when we can talk about a "world history" for the first time, mainly because mostly of land of our planet was in some way connected to other. In the Tordesilhas Treaty, Spain and Portugal splitted the world between the two and eventually got to almost everywhere, breaking barriers and achieving nations that they never dreamt about. But even so, in a world technically "connected", can we speak about "world history"? When a world whose ideas were mainly coming from Europe without considering anything from the old empires of the East, can we talk about a world history? I don't believe so. That way, I believe the world as we see it today is writing a story without any precedents; and that it is because we've never seen the values of East being as valuable as they are today. Until the first industrial revolution, it can be argued that the Chinese empire was the biggest empire existing, surviving raids from the Mongols, prospering and constantly inventing. In fact, they were one of the big influences for the first industrial revolutions (**cite article**). But after that period, History would fall in a more European/Western view.

But today, things have changed. The dynamics of power between the West and East have never been this balanced since the times of the industrial revolution. The 3 biggest economies in the World right now consist in the United States followed by China and

Japan. The world is increasingly global, more so than when Columbus arrived in America, more so than ever before in fact. These days, a conflict on one side of the world cannot leave the other side unaffected. As the famous expression goes "a flutter of a butterfly's wings here can cause an earthquake in Japan". In this perspective, the world must be united and strive to reach a consensus for its own security; regardless of values or ideologies, to prosper, security and peace is needed, not just for some, but for all.

It is with this vision that I start the beginning of my thesis, where I will approach the Global Security Initiative, an initiative presented by China with the objective of a greater coordination in view of a prosperous and, consequently, peaceful world. I will approach this theme from the perspective of International Relations, trying to understand, using three theories, what could proposals like this mean to the World and to the current global order. I will also indirectly explain why it encounters resistance from other countries in the international arena, trying to analyse and expose the suggested problematic in different ways.

1.1 Global Security Initiative, an extension of the idea of “community with shared future for mankind”

In 2013, when the then new Chinese president Xi Jinping came to power, one of his speeches marked a kind of Chinese "goal" in terms of foreign policy. At the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, he called for joint efforts to build a "global community forged by a common destiny"; a speech that would be repeated years later in front of the United Nations Office in Geneva, under the title of "work together to build a community with shared future for mankind". This concept seek to see the world order from a perspective where we all have common interests, where common development is possible and beneficial for all countries. In a certain way, it presupposes a new form of interaction in international relations, trying to replace the "traditional" form of power politics with a prosperous environment for cooperation and dialogue in the international scene.

The community of shared future for mankind emphasizes the importance of global governance and multilateralism in addressing global challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, terrorism, and public health, envisioning a world in which all

countries work together to achieve common goals and promote mutual prosperity. How many countries and international organizations joined?

This vision marked what would be, the main strategy of China in international politics, transforming itself in practical terms in cooperation's like the "Belt and Road Initiative", a massive infrastructure and development project launched by the Chinese government in 2013. The initiative follows the same aim as the vision previously described, enhancing connectivity and economic cooperation among countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, and beyond, by building a network of infrastructure and economic corridors. The initiative "has galvanized nearly 1 trillion U.S. dollars of investment, established more than 3,000 cooperation projects, created 420,000 local jobs, and helped lift almost 40 million people out of poverty" (Xinhua, 2023). Being a key component in Xi Jinping's foreign policy with investment in more than 150 countries and international organizations (World Bank, 2018), seeking to show the world that China is a benign element in the international system and that it intends to unleash with its project a set of situations where both them and the members of its program will be winners.

In another view, this project attempts to change how China is seen in the international stage, mainly through its ability to export the 'Chinese model' through its economic success, thereby attracting various developing countries to follow the so-called 'Beijing Consensus', characterised by state or party strong rule, adherence to its own resilience and a gradual reform and innovation directed at economic growth.

But very recently, China announced a set of new initiatives that aim to give another horizon to Chinese foreign policy. Recently were announced, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Civilizational Initiative and, the one that my project will focus on the most, the Global Security Initiative (GSI).

The GSI presents itself as another extension of the vision of the "shared future for mankind", but more related to the field of security, as the name suggests. This initiative follows the same principles that China has been advocating for a long time, aiming at a comprehensive and sustainable security, followed by the philosophy that humanity is an indivisible security community, preaching a new path that makes dialogue dominant over methods of "punishment" in the international scene. Partnership over alliances and win-win over zero-sum are key principles in the initiative.

In the conference where the Chinese ministry of Foreign Affairs presented the idea and the concept paper of the initiative, China presented it as “*China’s Proposal for Solving Security Challenges*” (Gang, 2023) which was presented in front of the former Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon. In his speech, ministry Qin Gang urged that “today’s world is not a tranquil place”, with “*the global security governance system is woefully lagging behind, and traditional and non-traditional security threats keep flaring up*” (Gang, 2023). He then announces China’s vision of the solution for these problems, the “Global Security Initiative” which he believes that “*demonstrates China’s sense of responsibility for safeguarding world peace and firm resolve to defend global security.*” (Gang, 2023).

In the GSI concept paper, they urge to:

- **Uphold the UN’s central role in security governance.** – Supporting UN’s efforts to prevent war and conflict and playing a bigger role in global security affairs.
- **Promote coordination and sound interactions among major countries** – Urging major countries to take the lead in upholding equality, cooperation and the rule of law.
- **Facilitate peaceful settlement of hotspot issues through dialogue** – Advocating for the parties involved to settle their disputes and differences through dialogue and consultation.
- **Tackle traditional and non-traditional security challenges** - Promoting global strategic stability, oppose arms race, and defuse nuclear war risks. As the non-traditional challenges: combat terrorism, safeguard data security, bio-security and the stability of supply and scientific and technological chains.
- **Strengthen the system and capacity for global security governance.** The development of a security governance architecture featuring coordination among governments and international organizations and participation of non-governmental organizations.

As stated, the GSI is rooted in the fine traditional Chinese culture that values peace above everything else, and is inspired by China’s independent foreign policy of peace and its practices with 5 principles to follow:

- **Mutual respect** – An equality no matter size, wealth, strength, religions, systems is preached, with the core interests of all countries and legitimate security concerns of all parties should be respected.

- **Openness and inclusion** – The GSI preaches that all countries are welcome to join in if they so wish; and all efforts for global peace and development will be supported.
- **Multilateralism** – This is a key point that was exalted many times during the concept paper, and that is that “Bilateral and multilateral security cooperation should be pursued among countries around the world and international and regional organizations in line with the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. Greater synergy should be forged among various security visions to seek the greatest possible common ground.”
- **Mutual benefit and win-win** – Another principle that was urged many times during the paper is that one’s own security and the common security of all should be advanced side by side, by pursuing win-win cooperation that contributes to each other’s progress, and opposing zero-sum game that benefits oneself at the cost of others, to expand the converging interests among all.
- **Holistic approach** – A coordination of the security governance and an urge that traditional and non-traditional security threats should be tackled in a holistic way. Equal emphasis should be placed on security and development, to eliminate the breeding ground for insecurity and seek fundamental and durable ways for achieving sustainable security.

It is worth noting that neither the United States nor the European Union are addressed in the concept paper. This is understandable considering that China does not see them as the primary objectives of its GSI diplomatic effort. However, according to Alice Ekman, this does not rule out the possibility of China opening the GSI to the EU and many of its member states. Arguing that the process will be similar to that observed during the early years of the BRI's promotion, 'inclusiveness' will be one of the keywords in the GSI promotion campaign, and a large number of invitations will be sent to EU Member State capitals in the coming months to participate in forums, high-level conferences, and new cooperation mechanisms of all kinds, with the hope in Beijing that some positive responses may generate a new set of transatlantic relations (Ekman, 2023)

This is how China's strategy for world peace is outlined, or at least a public outline of its foreign policy security cooperation strategy. This same strategic position has been put into practical terms in the very current case of the Ukraine war, where China was the only country to propose a concrete plan to conclude the conflict.

1.2 The Ukraine war and China's position

Last February marked one year since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Since then the international landscape has seriously changed. A troubled Europe with the fear of the Russian threat, where more countries want to join NATO, in an intense energy crisis, and dependent on the strength of the United States to defend itself. The world has proved once again that Francis Fukuyama was wrong about the "End of History".

However, although this war is taking place in Europe, it is a somewhat global war, given the level of interdependence of supply chains in the globalised world. The Indian foreign minister has said that "Europe's problems are not the world's problems" (Jaishankar, 2022) and in a way he may be right, but it would be unequivocal to think that this very war would not have consequences for the whole world (note that Ukraine is one of the largest producers of wheat, even called "Europe's farm" (DW, 2022)).

In the perspective previously highlighted, we can see China, a country that presents itself as an important indirect actor given the relations it has with both Russia and Ukraine. And it was in the perspective of wanting peace in the conflict that it referred to in the concept paper on GSI and in its presentation speech. Xi Jinping expressed his concern about a possible escalation of the conflict, and stated that he wanted to promote "peace talks" between the belligerents. It was in this context that shortly after China came to present the only peace plan presented by a country outside those directly involved.

Thus, China presented in the "China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis", 12 points that believes necessary to follow in order to reach a settlement of the conflict. These 12 points are:

1. Respecting the sovereignty of all countries. International law, particularly the goals and principles of the United Nations Charter, must be faithfully followed. Every countries' sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity must be adequately protected. All countries, large or little, powerful or weak, wealthy or impoverished, are equal members of the world community. All parties must work together to safeguard the fundamental standards that govern international relations and to protect international fairness and justice. Equitable and consistent implementation of international law should be encouraged, while double standards should be avoided..

2. Abandoning the Cold War mentality. A country's security should not be pursued at the expense of others. Regional security should not be attained by strengthening or extending military blocs. Every countries' legitimate security interests and concerns must be taken seriously and treated appropriately. A complicated problem does not have a simple answer. Following the goal of shared, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security, and keeping in mind the world's long-term peace and stability, all parties should contribute to the development of a balanced, effective, and sustainable European security architecture. All countries should oppose pursuing one's own security at the expense of others' security, avoid bloc conflict, and collaborate for Eurasian Continent peace and stability.

3. Ceasing hostilities. Nobody benefits from conflict or war. All sides must remain sensible and exhibit restraint in order to avoid fanning the fires and exacerbating tensions and preventing the crisis from worsening or spinning out of control. All parties should encourage Russia and Ukraine to work together and resume direct communication as soon as feasible in order to progressively deescalate the situation and eventually negotiate a complete ceasefire.

4. Resuming peace talks. The only possible solution to the Ukrainian situation is dialogue and diplomacy. Any attempts for a peaceful resolution of the problem must be welcomed and supported. The international community should remain dedicated to the correct strategy of fostering peace talks, assisting conflict parties in opening the door to a political settlement as soon as possible, and creating conditions and platforms for the restart of negotiations. China will continue to be a positive force in this area.

5. Resolving the humanitarian crisis. Any efforts to alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe must be encouraged and supported. Humanitarian operations should adhere to neutrality and impartiality norms, and humanitarian matters should not be politicized. Civilians' safety must be carefully maintained, and humanitarian corridors for civilian evacuation from combat zones must be established. Efforts are needed to expand humanitarian aid to key regions, improve humanitarian circumstances, and ensure speedy, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access in order to avoid a larger-scale humanitarian disaster. The UN should be assisted in organizing the delivery of humanitarian supplies to crisis zones.

6. Protecting civilians and prisoners of war (POWs). Parties to the war should scrupulously adhere to international humanitarian law, avoid assaulting civilians or civilian institutions, protect women, children, and other conflict victims, and respect the fundamental rights of POWs. China supports the exchange of POWs between Russia and Ukraine and urges all parties to make conditions more suitable for this purpose.

7. Keeping nuclear power plants safe. China strongly condemns armed assaults on nuclear power plants or other peaceful nuclear facilities, and urges all parties to follow international law, particularly the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), and to avoid man-made nuclear accidents at all costs. China backs the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in its efforts to promote the safety and security of peaceful nuclear installations.

8. Reducing strategic risks. Nuclear weapons should not be utilized, and nuclear warfare should be avoided. Nuclear weapons should not be threatened or used. Nuclear proliferation must be avoided, as well as a nuclear crisis. China condemns any country's study, development, and use of chemical and biological weapons under any circumstances.

9. Facilitating grain exports. All parties must completely and efficiently execute the Black Sea Grain Initiative agreed by Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, and the UN in a balanced way, and assist the UN in playing an important role in this respect. China's planned global food security cooperation effort offers a viable answer to the global food issue.

10. Stopping unilateral sanctions. Unilateral sanctions and maximal pressure will not solve the situation; they will only exacerbate it. China rejects UN Security Council-authorized unilateral sanctions. Relevant nations should refrain from adopting unilateral sanctions and "long-arm jurisdiction" against other countries in order to contribute to deescalating the Ukrainian issue and creating circumstances for developing countries to strengthen their economies and improve their people's lives.

11. Keeping industrial and supply chains stable. All parties should work hard to keep the current global economic system in place and reject utilizing the global economy as a political instrument or weapon. Collaborative measures are required to alleviate the crisis's spillover effects and prevent it from damaging global economic recovery by

interrupting international cooperation in energy, banking, agricultural commerce, and transportation.

12. Promoting post-conflict reconstruction. The international community must take action to assist with post-conflict reconstruction in war zones. China is prepared to offer help and play a positive role in this effort.

China's position paper on how to reach a political settlement in Ukraine, released on the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, concludes China's February push to promote some sort of "Chinese wisdom" in global security. It is crucial to understand that the plan has sparked some diplomatic effort aimed at resolving the war, and while Kyiv has not endorsed the initiative, it has not denounced it either. With President Zelenskyy understanding that his country needs to work with China, recognizing Beijing's ideas even though disagreeing with parts from it, but understanding that ""But it's something," (SBS News, 2023) and believing that China's involvement it's not necessarily "bad" ""China has shown its thoughts. I believe that the fact that China started talking about Ukraine is not bad," (SBS News, 2023).

On the other hand, the Kremlin also acknowledged the Chinese proposal for peace, but stated that the conditions for a peaceful resolution of the conflict are not in order "at the moment" (quote is the same). With the Russian spokesman saying that "We paid a lot of attention to our Chinese friends' plan (...) for now, we don't see any of the conditions that are needed to bring this whole story towards peace."

More recently, the Chinese president visited Russia with the goal of discussing the peace plan previously presented. Of course, this visit did not stop there: he signed the *Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Coordination for the New Era*, reinforcing the existing ties between both powers.

After this, last April, Xi Jinping spoke with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy by phone, the first conversation between Kiev and Beijing since the conflict began. In this conversation, the Chinese president called for the political resolution of the conflict as soon as possible, something that Zelenskyy said was not possible given the Russian military occupation. Also, during the dialogue, Xi Jinping said he didn't want to be a state that "fuels the fire", in order to respond to the allegations from the West that China was or would supply arms

to Russia, reinforcing that its position on the UN Security Council and as a power that considers itself responsible in the international scene, would not fit with a position that would profit from war (Bodner, 2022).

Still, despite the Chinese suggestion and position, there has been some resistance not necessarily from the countries directly involved in the conflict, but from third countries, mainly the United States.

1.3 United States vs China

The relationship between the People's Republic of China and the United States is perhaps one of the most complex relationships to analyse between superpowers. It is important to emphasize the relevance of the relations between the United States and China, since the leader of the Western bloc is the one that most influences the other Western countries to antagonize China. Since Xi Jinping came to power in 2013, the US government has had 3 different administrations: The Obama Administration; the Trump Administration; and most recently, the Biden Administration.

During the Obama administration, the relationship between China and the United States was characterized by both cooperation and competition, with both countries engaging in a complex dance of cooperation, competition, and occasional conflict.

On the one hand, the two countries worked together on a number of global issues, such as climate change and nuclear non-proliferation. In 2014, China and the US reached an agreement on climate change that set targets for both countries to reduce their carbon emissions, which was a significant milestone in the global fight against climate change. On the other hand, the US was concerned about China's growing economic and military power, and tensions arose over issues such as trade, cybersecurity, and territorial disputes in the South China Sea. The Obama administration also took a more assertive stance on human rights issues in China, which further strained the relationship between the two countries.

During the Trump administration, the relationship between China and the United States was marked by significant tensions, with both countries engaging in a trade war, increased military posturing, and diplomatic sparring.

One of the major issues that strained the relationship was trade. In 2018, the US imposed tariffs on Chinese goods, triggering retaliatory measures from China. The two countries went back and forth with escalating tariffs on each other's goods, resulting in significant disruptions to global trade. Another area of conflict was military tensions. The US expressed concerns about China's increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea, and conducted several freedom of navigation operations in the area. Meanwhile, China continued to develop its military capabilities and expand its presence in the region, leading to increased tensions between the two countries.

Overall, the relationship between China and the US during the Trump administration was characterized by significant tensions, with both countries engaging in a trade war, military posturing, and diplomatic sparring. While the two countries continued to engage with each other on some issues, such as North Korea's nuclear program, the overall relationship was marked by conflict and distrust.

The relationship between China and the United States during the Biden administration has been marked by a mix of cooperation and competition, with both countries acknowledging the need to work together on some issues while also remaining wary of each other's actions.

One of the key areas of cooperation has been in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, with the two countries cooperating on issues such as vaccine distribution and research. Additionally, the US and China have expressed a willingness to work together on issues related to climate change and nuclear non-proliferation. However, there has also been significant tension between the two countries. The US has also been critical of China's growing military capabilities and its territorial claims in the South China Sea. It sensitive topic.

One notable aspect of the relationship between China and the US during the Biden administration is the recognition by the US that China is the only country capable of potentially substituting them as the leader of the world. This has led to a greater emphasis on competing with China in areas such as technology and infrastructure development, with the US investing in initiatives such as the Quad or, more recently, AUKUS in order to counter China's influence in the region and attempting to change the geopolitical landscape.

For all these years, the Chinese government has accused the Americans of having a "cold war" mentality by their constant approach to superpower relations. Proof of this is US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who voiced concern about Beijing's attitude during the Munich summit. He stated that China has supplied non-lethal aid to Russian President Vladimir Putin's war effort and that the US has intelligence that Beijing is "considering offering lethal support." Something that China has labelled as a "smear" and stated that there is no proof to back it up.

On the other side, China had a reaction from the foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin, diverting the US accusations: "China did not create the Ukraine crisis. It is not a party to the crisis and has not provided weapons to either side. The United States is in no position to point fingers at China, still less to shift blame to China." (Xinhua, 2023) and saying that notwithstanding Washington's vow to avert violence, few conflicts and wars that have erupted in Europe and throughout the world had nothing to do with the US, continuing to supply weapons to battlefields while taking no actual steps to fulfil its pledge. (Xinhua, 2023). Finally, on his speech, Wang Wenbin urged for the stop of the "cold war mentality", asking for the US to have an objective view of the efforts made by China: "The U.S. side should take an objective view of the efforts made by China and the international community to promote talks for peace, rather than cling to the Cold War mentality, still less should it push for the protraction and escalation of the conflict," (mesmo link)

Still, criticism of Chinese peace projects does not stop with the US secretary of state, with the American media playing a crucial part in demonizing China's projects and positions regarding most topics they involve themselves in, often trying to mystify Chinese objectives in order to damage its image not only on the international scene, but also towards the population. Examples of this could be the US Institute of Peace, framing the GSI as an almost "evil" plan: "The paper's (referring to the GSI concept paper) call for a "community of shared security for mankind" echoes China's campaign to reshape prevailing modes of global governance. It notably prioritizes regional groupings in which China plays a leading role or exercises influence, including a number forged by China itself, like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization or the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation, among others." (Freeman, Glantz and Scobell, 2023). Or several think-thanks like *Foreign Policy* publishing articles like: "China's Ukraine Peace Plan is Actually About Taiwan" (Lind, 2023), in order to try to "denigrate" Chinese efforts and somehow not

take the Chinese out of the "blame" spotlight, warning the international community that despite all these dialogues and proposals, the objectives would be more Machiavellian than superficially seen.

The enactment of the GSI has important ramifications for US-China relations from an American standpoint. Amid a slew of global crises, not least the conflict in Ukraine, the US suspects that China may be using the GSI to undermine US leadership as a source of long-term security, market the means of China's security state globally, and divert international attention away from US efforts to build international condemnation.

1.4 Problem Formulation

With the advance of an initiative whose goal would be to create a more multilateral world in the face of globalization, giving voice to countries that do not have as much weight in international decisions; a more peaceful world that promotes dialogue instead of conflict, something that has even extended to a possible solution (although obviously with its flaws) in the Ukraine-Russia War, China seems to emerge in the international scene with the intention of reconfiguring itself in the same, assuming another kind of role with some more responsibility than before. Thus, this project begins with the question: "Why does the Global Security Initiative could be seen as a potential way to achieve a Chinese World Order?", and also intends to explain why China suggested the peace plan in Ukraine, which will serve as a case study as matter of exemplification of the more general topic.

Inevitably, when we talk about world order, the mention of the US becomes impossible, and so I will try to answer, even if in a subtle or indirect way because it would be easy to deviate from the intended path for this thesis, the "why does GSI encounter resistance from the US?". Still, it should be noted that when I mention a "Chinese world order", I am not referring to a world where China is the ultimate hegemon, but to a world where Chinese ideals are cemented in its behaviour.

For the analysis of the topic, three theories of international relations will be chosen in order to provide a better understanding of the issue. For a different approach from the more traditional ones in the West, for an approach that may aim to understand Chinese thought at its core, and for having the possibility to be supervised by two Professors with links to China since its Birth, I will try to use at least two Chinese perspectives that can

explain Chinese behaviour a little better than Western theories, something that seems logical to me given the theme. So, I will use: the culturalist theory, more specifically, a modern adaptation of the Chinese "All Under Heaven" theory; the constructivist theory of International Relations; and Realism with a reference to the "Moral Realism" theory by Yan Xuetong.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research design and methodological considerations

This research is based on a qualitative and quantitative research design using 3 theories to analyse from different angles the research question related to the Global Security Initiative and then, in order to present a more thorough analysis of the problem, to use a kind of "junction" (as far as the theoretical limits and compatibilities allow) of the 3 theories to analyse the case study, the 12 points for peace in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The aim of this thesis is to understand why we can possibly look at the Global Security Initiative and the Ukrainian peace plan as an initiation of a Chinese world order. Through the use of three theories, two of which have "Chinese characteristics", I believe it is possible to reach a conclusion beyond traditional Western analysis of the Chinese "resurgence" as a responsible world power.

2.2 Choice of theoretical frameworks

Analysing the GSI through the lenses of the "All under Heaven" theory inserted in the culturalist theory, constructivism and moral realism can provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex and dynamic nature of international relations.

Realism, with special attention given to the version of Yan Xuetong, emphasizes the role of power and interests in shaping international relations. It posits that states are rational actors who pursue their interests and seek to maximize their power in the international system. Relating "moral realism" and China's Global Security Initiative means recognizing that nations will continue to act in their own self-interest, and that

cooperation and shared visions may only be possible if they align with these interests, while also taking in consideration “morality”

The culturalist theory, taking in consideration the “All Under Heaven theory”, emphasizes the importance of culture in shaping international relations. It highlights the need for recognizing and respecting cultural differences to achieve a harmonious and balanced world. Incorporating this theory into the analysis means recognizing the importance of cultural diversity and promoting cultural exchange and understanding to build trust and cooperation between nations, the basis of the Global Security Initiative.

Constructivism emphasizes the importance of ideas, norms, and values in shaping international relations. It contends that the international system is affected not just by tangible variables like power, but also by social constructs like identity and speech. Applying constructivism to the analysis entails acknowledging that ideas and norms may impact the conduct of international system players, and that common values and beliefs may be required to realize a vision that adheres to the GSI.

By combining these three perspectives, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of what China envisions for the world through the GSI and the 12 point for peace in Ukraine. Realism (moral realism) reminds us of the importance of considering power and interests in international relations, while the "All under Heaven" theory inserted in the culturalist theory emphasizes the importance of culture and diversity in promoting harmony and balance. Constructivism highlights the importance of ideas and norms in shaping international relations, and the potential for shared values and beliefs to promote cooperation.

Furthermore, integrating these viewpoints can give us a deeper perception of the theme, using theories more "adapted" to the reality we seek to understand. In a way, the "All Under Heaven" theory will allow us to have a greater cultural understanding of Chinese foreign policy thought, useful to understand how culture affects it; the constructivist perspective will allow us to understand the influence of Chinese ideational values and how a state can change its image on the international scene; and finally, Moral Realism will allow us to have a better perception of the interests behind the Chinese initiative. The goal is that these three theories together can provide a different perspective on the narrative developed by the West, helping to explain Chinese goals and whether we can speak of a "Chinese world order".

2.2.1 “All Under Heaven” within Culturalist theory

The “All Under Heaven theory” is one of the most important concepts in Chinese political thought and provides a unique perspective on global governance, cultural identity, and world order. As a part of the culturalist approach to international relations, the theory emphasizes the role of culture in shaping beliefs, values, and norms, and the need to recognize and respect cultural differences in the promotion of harmony and cooperation between cultures. Scholars such as Wang Gungwu have contributed to the development of the culturalist approach, highlighting the role of cultural factors in shaping Chinese foreign policy and diplomacy.

The Global Security Initiative (GSI) put forth by China is closely aligned with the All Under Heaven theory and its culturalist approach. The GSI's vision of a shared future for mankind emphasizes the importance of comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security for all nations, while respecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity. The GSI also underscores the need to take seriously the legitimate security concerns of all countries and to peacefully resolve differences and disputes through dialogue and consultation.

When viewed through a culturalist lens, the All Under Heaven theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the GSI's approach to global security. Both perspectives recognize the importance of cultural diversity and the need to promote cooperation between different civilizations and cultures. At the same time, they emphasize the need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, highlighting the importance of peaceful resolution of disputes and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

In sum, the All Under Heaven theory, as part of the culturalist approach to international relations, offers a unique Chinese perspective on world order, global governance, and cultural identity. The GSI, which is consistent with this perspective, highlights the need for comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security for all nations, while respecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Through their alignment, these two perspectives offer a valuable framework for understanding contemporary discussions of international relations and security issues.

2.2.2 Constructivism

Constructivism is an international relations theoretical approach that stresses the significance of ideas, conventions, and common beliefs in affecting the conduct of international system participants. From a constructivist standpoint, China's GSI may be viewed as an attempt to develop a shared sense of security and cooperation based on shared norms and values. One key aspect of the GSI is its emphasis on a "shared future for mankind," which reflects a normative vision of global cooperation and interdependence. This vision is consistent with the constructivist idea that shared norms and beliefs can shape the behavior of actors in the international system. Additionally, the GSI emphasizes the importance of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, which reflects a normative commitment to the principles of international law and the UN Charter.

From a constructivist perspective, the GSI can be seen as an attempt to promote a shared understanding of security based on common norms and values. By emphasizing the importance of dialogue and consultation in resolving differences and disputes, the GSI seeks to promote a cooperative approach to security that is based on shared norms and values rather than power politics or zero-sum thinking. Additionally, the GSI's emphasis on non-traditional security threats reflects a recognition of the growing importance of non-state actors and global interdependence in shaping the international security environment.

Overall, the GSI can be seen as an example of how constructivist ideas about the role of norms, ideas, and shared beliefs can shape the behavior of actors in the international system. By promoting a vision of security that is based on shared norms and values, the GSI seeks to promote a more cooperative and inclusive approach to global security that is consistent with the principles of international law and the UN Charter.

2.2.3 Moral Realism

Realism and moral realism provide an interesting perspective for analysing the Global Security Initiative (GSI) proposed by China. Realism is a theory of international relations that emphasizes the role of power and self-interest in shaping state behaviour. From this

perspective, the GSI could be seen as a way for China to promote its own interests and enhance its power in the global arena. The initiative calls for the promotion of a "shared future for mankind," which implies a vision of global order where China can play a leading role. The emphasis on respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries and taking seriously the legitimate security concerns of all countries could be seen as a way for China to secure its own interests while appearing to be a responsible global actor.

On the other hand, moral realism, as proposed by Yan Xuetong, provides a more nuanced perspective on China's approach to global security. According to Yan, moral realism emphasizes the importance of moral values in international relations and argues that moral norms and principles should guide state behaviour. In this sense, the GSI could be seen as a reflection of China's moral values, such as respect for sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and peaceful conflict resolution.

Yan Xuetong also argues that China's moral values are different from those of the West, which tend to emphasize individual rights and freedoms over collective well-being. This could explain why China's vision for global security emphasizes the concept of a "shared future for mankind," which prioritizes cooperation and collaboration over competition and conflict. From a moral realist perspective, the GSI could be seen as a way for China to promote its own moral values while also contributing to the global good.

In conclusion, the Global Security Initiative proposed by China can be analysed through the lenses of realism and moral realism. Realism suggests that the initiative is a way for China to promote its own interests and enhance its power, while moral realism highlights the importance of moral values and principles in international relations and argues that the initiative reflects China's moral values and priorities.

2.3 Choice of Case

As a case study for the thesis, the peace plan suggested by China for the conflict between Ukraine and Russia will be used, which had already been talked about in the introduction. The choice of this plan specifically is given for a few reasons:

- The date it was released was after the release of the Global Security Initiative's concept paper, and it can be seen as one of the consequences of the initiative's plan itself (the issue is one of the few that is directly talked about in the project's presentation);
- From the perspective of "All Under Heaven" within culturalist theory, we can relate the peace plan to the "shared vision for mankind" foreign policy philosophy, reinforcing that culture also influences foreign policy;
- From a constructivist perspective of international relations, the presentation of a peace plan in Ukraine also seeks to reinforce the Chinese stance on the international scene, seeking to dissociate itself from the "Ukraine today, Taiwan tomorrow" (CITAR) narrative, and to show itself as a benign actor in the world, being the first country to present a concrete solution with some impartiality;
- Finally, from a realistic perspective, the issue of the war between Ukraine and Russia involves special attention from China, given that Russia and China have signed a partnership of "no limits" and Ukraine is part of the "Belt and Road Initiative" project, being central to the project's successful development in Europe.

Therefore, due to the relationship that can be made between the logical principles of Chinese foreign policy, its materialization in a first phase in the shared future for mankind, followed by projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative and now the Global Security Initiative, it makes sense to use the 12 points for peace in Ukraine as a more specific case study for this research.

2.4 Source Collection

A source review was undertaken as a starting point for the research to determine the availability of data and to locate relevant data. The examination of the sources aided in identifying the study objectives based on what information is accessible and what suggestions for further research have been made. Several keywords were utilized to discover relevant journal and newspaper articles during the source collecting process. To begin, keyword searches on terms like "global security initiative", "12 point for peace" or "China's world order" were used to gather information on the thematic. During the data gathering, it was employed a keyword search as a technique to assure data reduction and the elimination of extraneous information.

Newspaper and journal articles served as main materials for understanding the reaction from different countries to the initiative. When presenting theoretical frameworks, academic literature will be used as main sources, and secondary sources will be used to illustrate topics within the field of research. Quantitative data on Chinese external FDI and the Chinese financial role have been utilized to help understanding where China wants to posit in the global order. Whereas quantitative data was utilized to assess China's current involvement in the international financial arena and hence its place in theoretical frameworks, no quantitative data will be generated from this study. Think tanks, research publications, and official government pronouncements will be utilized to elicit development as it occurs, as well as to give a starting point for understanding how empirical evidence might validate the theoretical framework.

2.5 Limitations

As the GSI concept paper was announced at the end of February, little academic literature could be found to supplement the perspectives presented. Often, the term "shared future for mankind" had to be used as a search term to find any academic analysis of Chinese foreign policy philosophy. Given the timeliness of the topic and the rapid pace of international relations, one of the biggest limitations in executing this project was the constant need to update news of what was happening in the world. For example, the problem's contextualization in the introduction was completed in less than a month after starting in February but had to be changed several times due to, for instance, the conversation between Xi Jinping and Zelenskyy or the meeting between Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin. Another example could be the support as an intermediary in the agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia that occurred on March 10, 2023, which would serve as one of the examples to support the analysis of the problem.

Therefore, I feel that the absence of empirical data beyond what was exposed in the introduction is due partly to my inability to manage all events in the fast-paced world we live in, but also because this initiative is still relatively new, lacking the most decisive empirical factors to corroborate my theoretical analysis.

Regarding theoretical exposition, since the analysis consists of two Chinese international relations theories, I sometimes found it challenging to find the information I needed

directly from the author. This difficulty arose mainly during the search for the "All Under Heaven theory," which, not originally an international relations theory, has several more modern adaptations. However, I believe I have been able to understand at least the surface of it (tianxia is a complex concept for a Westerner to understand), to execute a fruitful analysis for discussion.

3.0 Theory

3.1 Theoretical characteristics of the All Under Heaven Theory

The "All Under Heaven" theory, or Tianxia (天下 in Chinese), is an ancient concept deeply rooted in Chinese history and philosophy. Chinese authors, such as Kang Xiaoguang, have highlighted that the concept dates back to the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BC), when the Chinese empire was expanding its territories and integrating various ethnic groups under its rule (Xiaoguang, 2017). The concept has evolved over time, but it has always been characterized by a vision of the world as a single community or family, with a shared destiny and under a single ruler or empire.

Contemporary Chinese scholars, such as Zhao Tingyang, have revived the "All Under Heaven" theory and applied it to the context of international relations. In this context, the theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of all people and nations, and the importance of finding ways to promote harmony and cooperation between them, stressing the significance of cultural identity and diversity in shaping the interactions between nations (Tingyang, 2005). The theory, especially in its older "versions", presupposed a Chinese cultural superiority over others. This was not only because they considered themselves culturally superior, but because, as Kissinger mentions in his book *"On China"* "The Chinese emperors felt it was impracticable to think of influencing countries to whom nature had given the misfortune to be located at such a great distance from China" (Kissinger, 2011), the former "Middle Empire" having been blessed with the "mandate of heaven". It is important to note that, for the most modern thinkers of All Under Heaven theory, the feeling of cultural superiority is not present in the formulations of their hypotheses.

The culturalist approach to international relations is based on the belief that culture plays a crucial role in shaping our beliefs, values, and norms, and that it should be considered when analyzing international interactions. This perspective originated in the study of anthropology and sociology and has been applied to the field of international relations in recent decades. Chinese authors have made significant contributions to the development of the culturalist theory, emphasizing the role of cultural factors in shaping Chinese foreign policy and diplomacy. One such author is Wang Gungwu, who has explored the impact of Chinese culture on the country's interactions with other nations. He argues that China's cultural heritage has contributed to its unique approach to diplomacy, emphasizing the importance of relationships and personal connections in building trust and cooperation between nations (Gungwu, 2011).

Other scholars who have contributed to the development of the culturalist approach include Samuel Huntington, who argued in his famous "Clash of Civilizations" thesis that cultural differences are a primary source of conflict in the world today. He posits that understanding cultural differences is essential to promoting cooperation and avoiding conflict between civilizations.

When viewed through a culturalist lens, the "All Under Heaven" theory emphasizes the importance of recognizing cultural differences while promoting harmony and cooperation between cultures. This idea is consistent with the Confucian emphasis on harmony and respect for diversity. The Western philosopher Martha Nussbaum has argued that cultural diversity is essential for promoting human flourishing and that recognizing cultural differences is a way of promoting respect for human dignity (Nussbaum, 1997). This idea is also reflected in the "All Under Heaven" theory's emphasis on cultural diversity.

For a somewhat more familiar understanding, the concept "tianxia" seems somewhat similar to the concept of "cosmopolitanism", as developed by Immanuel Kant (Kant, 1795). Cosmopolitanism emphasizes the idea that all human beings belong to a single community, and that we have a duty to work towards the betterment of that community as a whole. In the context of the "All Under Heaven" theory, this idea of a shared human community is reflected in the vision of the world as a single family, under a single ruler or empire.

The "All Under Heaven" thesis offers a distinctive Chinese viewpoint on global order, governance, and cultural identity. When examined through a culturalist perspective, the

philosophy highlights the value of cultural distinctions while fostering cultural peace and cooperation.

3.2 Theoretical characteristics of Constructivism

At the end of the Cold War, the constructivist thesis emerged within international relations theory, bringing together contributions from sociology, philosophy, and social psychology, at a time when the two most established theories in the field (Realism and Liberalism) did not seem to be able to justify what was going on in the world. This difficulty on the side of Realism and Liberalism in resolving the question of why the Cold War ended was due, above all, to their viewpoints with a strong concentration on the realm of states, not leaving much room for individual agency, which had a place for study in the constructivist thesis. This position in the theory stems from constructivists' belief that the world as we know it is the outcome of a social construction that can be modified by human actors, whether they be citizens (logically influential) or leaders of nations. This concept of social construction of reality allows us to see constructivism as a "idealist" philosophy, in contrast to the notion that reality is controlled solely by material elements. Idealism, on the other hand, thinks that reality is largely governed by ideational variables (distribution of ideas or knowledge), which does not reject the function of material elements but deems them secondary or otherwise significant when clothed with meanings or ideas by agents (Wendt, 1999).

This school of thought considers agency and structure to be mutually constitutive, with agency influencing structure and structure influencing agency. In this context, agency is defined as "the ability of someone to act," and structure is defined as "the international system that comprises of material and ideational parts. (Theys, 2017)" Constructivists, in particular, are interested in intersubjective knowledge, which is concerned with jointly shared concepts and the patterns of behaviour that they generate (Wendt, 1999). These confront agents as external, real/objective, and coercive 'social truths, (Durkheim, 1998)' such as norms, regulations, institutions, and ideologies. Intersubjective knowledge structures are not reducible to agents since they have their own ontological position and are somewhat independent of them; agents may have incomplete or incorrect knowledge of them and their influence may be observed.

Another distinguishing aspect of constructivist theory is the concept of identities and interests. Agents are not passive puppets of the structure; they have reflexivity and agency capability that is somewhat independent of it. This gets us to the third postulate: "Identities are the proximate causes of decisions, preferences, and behaviour" (Hopf, 1998), not to mention the structure to which they are tied. Identity tells the agent who he is, but understanding about the self is dependent on the recognition of others, implying an intersubjective element. Thus, the identity of a larger state implies a set of objectives that differ from those of a smaller state, and it is likely more concerned with its external influence than with its survival (which varies according to context).

3.3 Theoretical characteristics of Realism

Realism is a prominent theory in the field of International Relations, which holds that states are the primary actors in the international system and that their actions are primarily driven by their own interests. The theory emphasizes the competitive nature of international politics and the need for states to maintain a balance of power to ensure their security and survival.

Hans J. Morgenthau is one of the most influential scholars in the development of Realism. Morgenthau's theory is based on the assumption that states are rational actors that pursue their national interests in the international arena. He argued that the primary national interest of states is the pursuit of power, which they seek to achieve through military, economic, and diplomatic means. According to Morgenthau, power is the ability to achieve one's objectives despite the opposition of others.

Morgenthau's emphasis on the balance of power can be traced back to the ancient Greek historian Thucydides, who argued that the growth of Athens' power threatened the security of Sparta and its allies, leading to the Peloponnesian War. Morgenthau believed that this historical example illustrated the dangers of unbalanced power in international relations and that states must take steps to prevent one state from dominating the system.

For Morgenthau, the balance of power was not just a concept but a strategy for maintaining international stability. He argued that alliances, military capabilities, and strategic diplomacy were essential tools for achieving balance and preventing any one state from becoming too powerful. By forming alliances with other states and developing

military capabilities, states could deter potential aggressors and protect themselves from threats.

The concept of the Thucydides Trap, derived from the writings of the ancient Greek historian Thucydides, who was mentioned earlier and is often associated with Realism. The trap refers to the idea that when a rising power threatens to displace an established power, the result can be conflict and war. According to Realism, this happens because both powers are driven by their own self-interest, and each perceives the other as a threat to their own security and survival. This creates a situation in which war becomes more likely as each side seeks to protect its own interests.

Moral Realism, on the other hand, is a more recent development within Realism, which emphasizes the importance of morality in international politics. Yan Xuetong, a Chinese scholar of International Relations, is a leading proponent of Moral Realism. Xuetong argues that states should pursue their interests in a way that is both self-interested and morally responsible.

Xuetong's theory is rooted in the Realist tradition, but it departs from Morgenthau's emphasis on power politics. According to Xuetong, the key to achieving lasting security and prosperity in the international system is through the cultivation of moral leadership. He argues that states should pursue their interests while also adhering to moral principles, such as respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states.

In Xuetong's view, the pursuit of moral leadership is essential for maintaining stability in the international system. He argues that states that act in a morally responsible way are more likely to be trusted and respected by other states, which in turn leads to greater cooperation and stability. Xuetong also emphasizes the importance of building a strong domestic society, which he sees as essential for maintaining international stability.

In the western view of realism, the pursuit of self-interest is the primary objective of states in international relations, and moral considerations are often seen as secondary or even irrelevant. However, Yan Xuetong's moral realism emphasizes that states should pursue their interests in a way that is both self-interested and morally responsible.

In this sense, Yan Xuetong's view is compatible with the western view of realism, as it recognizes that states will always act in their own self-interest. However, Yan Xuetong's moral realism also emphasizes the importance of moral principles, such as respecting the

sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states, which is not always a central concern in the western view of realism.

4.0 Theoretical Analysis

4.1 An analysis through the lens of the “All Under Heaven” theory inserted in the Culturalist theory

In his influential book "Clash of Civilizations", Samuel Huntington argues that the difference between cultures would mark the reason for what would become the next great conflict in the post-Cold War period. In fact, and fortunately, in 2023 we have not yet had any conflict whose belligerents were two world superpowers in a direct way, but these same superpowers have been marking the biggest differences and treading the next paths in international relations and consequently, of the world.

Cultural theory argues something similar to the point made by Huntington above, cultural values and beliefs shape a country's identity. A country's sense of self and its national interests are often shaped by cultural values and beliefs. In the same way, also cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings and biases in the way that countries perceive each other, with these perceptions influencing a country's foreign policy decisions and how they behave, communicate and create barriers towards the others.

In today's world, where since the end of the Cold War we do not have so many world powers, inevitably the clash between civilizations is given. And in this case especially, the clash between the Western bloc led by the US and the somewhat more multilateral bloc, but usually represented by the Western media with China as its leader, becomes more and more evident as time inevitably passes.

From a cultural theory perspective, the GSI and the Chinese idea of a shared vision for mankind can be analysed in terms of its alignment with Chinese cultural values and traditions, including the idea of "all under heaven." For example, China's emphasis on the importance of cooperation and respect for diversity can be seen as reflecting a commitment to the idea of a shared global community, in which all nations are equal and interconnected. This interconnection was even mentioned during Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow: *“It is a world where countries are linked with and dependent on one another at*

a level never seen before. Mankind, by living in the global village in the same era and on the same Earth where history and reality meet, has increasingly emerged as a community of common destiny in which everyone has in himself a little bit of others” (Global Times, 2023). And provides the basis for the Global Security Initiative, whose heart is to advocate for a notion of shared security, respecting and defending the security of all countries, and solving complex and interrelated security concerns with a win-win attitude.

One way to interpret the shared vision for mankind in the context of "all under heaven" is to view it as a call for a more harmonious and inclusive world order, in which diverse cultural traditions are respected and valued. The shared vision for mankind can be viewed as an attempt by China to promote its own cultural identity and values on the global stage. By calling for a more harmonious and inclusive world order, in which diverse cultural traditions are respected and valued.

The concept of "all under heaven" is a central tenet of China's cultural identity, and it refers to the idea that the world is one unified community, with all nations and peoples belonging to a common order. This concept is rooted in Chinese history and culture, and it emphasizes the importance of harmony, balance, and mutual respect in international relations. In fact, this return to Chinese ancient philosophy isn't entirely new. It has been seen with the last 2 presidents of China; with Hu Jintao, suggesting a "harmonious society" and Xi Jinping the "shared vision for mankind", showing how rooted is the Chinese ancient thinking in China's policies.

Scholars such as Zhao Tingyang have argued that the concept of "all under heaven" can be applied to the modern world, and that it can provide a basis for a new model of global governance that is based on the idea of tianxia. According to Zhao, tianxia refers to a world order in which all nations and peoples are equal, and in which cultural diversity is respected and valued. This model of global governance is based on the idea of a shared destiny, in which all nations and peoples are interconnected and interdependent.

From this perspective, the shared vision for mankind can be seen as a call for a new model of global governance that is based on the principles of tianxia. This model emphasizes the importance of mutual respect, cultural diversity, and shared responsibility, and it seeks to promote a more harmonious and inclusive world order. In this context, the shared vision for mankind can be viewed as an attempt by China to challenge the dominance of

Western-centric values and norms in international relations, and to promote a more culturally diverse and inclusive world order.

Following this line of reasoning, there is also the Global Civilization Initiative, an initiative also launched at the time of GSI's launch, whose lines advocate the Respect for civilizational variety, humanity's common values, appreciating civilizational legacy and creativity, and collectively robust worldwide people-to-people interactions and collaboration. It includes the fundamental concepts and principles that allow diverse civilizations to accept and cohabit, as well as a source of motivation and a practical road to realization (Global Times, 2023). This same initiative has already materially demonstrated its value through the formation of the Center of Greek and Chinese Ancient Civilizations in Athens, symbolized by statues of Socrates and Confucius on its doorstep as if in dialogue with each other. An initiative that is coherent with Xi Jinping's discourse at the opening ceremony of the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations in 2019: "It is foolish to believe that one's race and civilization are superior to others, and it is disastrous to wilfully reshape or even replace other civilizations." (Xi Jinping, 2019).

From a culturalist perspective, the GSI can be seen as an expression of China's desire to establish a new world order that is more in line with its cultural values and historical experiences. The emphasis on mutual respect, openness, and multilateralism reflects China's traditional approach to foreign policy, which seeks to avoid conflict and establish harmonious relationships with other states. The GSI also seeks to promote cooperation and coordination among major countries, which reflects China's belief in the importance of maintaining a balance of power in international relations.

Moreover, specially from a Western perspective, the GSI can also be seen as an expression of China's desire to establish itself as a global leader and to challenge the dominance of Western powers in shaping the international system. This is reflected in the GSI's emphasis on the role of non-Western countries in global security governance and the need to reform the existing international system to make it more representative and inclusive. This reflects China's belief that the existing system is biased towards Western powers and does not fully reflect the interests and perspectives of non-Western countries.

Which triggers the reaction from the West to China's, that has been mixed. Some Western policymakers and scholars have welcomed the initiative as a positive step towards a more

inclusive and cooperative world order, while others have expressed scepticism and concern about China's motives and intentions.

On the one hand, some Western policymakers and scholars have argued that the shared vision for mankind represents a potential opportunity for greater cooperation and collaboration between China and the West. They have pointed to the shared challenges facing the global community, such as climate change and global economic instability, and have argued that a more inclusive and cooperative approach is needed to address these challenges.

On the other hand, some Western policymakers and scholars have expressed scepticism and concern about China's motives and intentions in promoting the shared vision for mankind. They have argued that China's emphasis on cultural diversity and its rejection of Western-centric values and norms may be an attempt to promote its own interests and to challenge the existing world order.

In particular, some Western policymakers and scholars have expressed concern about China's growing assertiveness in the international arena, and its increasing willingness to challenge Western-led institutions and norms. They have argued that China's promotion of the shared vision for mankind may be part of a broader effort to reshape the international order in a way that better reflects China's interests and values.

4.2 Constructivist analysis

Constructivism offers a different lens to analyze the GSI and its potential to achieve a Chinese world order. According to Alexander Wendt, states' behavior is not determined solely by material factors such as power and security interests, but also by their ideas, norms, and identities. Therefore, a state's foreign policy can be influenced by its culture, history, and values.

As analysed earlier, Cultural theory stresses the importance of cultural traditions, beliefs, and practices in molding social behavior and political results. It contends that cultural differences and conflicts are necessary components of social life, and that cultural traditions play an important role in defining social norms and values. Cultural theorists contend that distinct cultural traditions may lead to divergent approaches to international

relations, and that cultural aspects must be considered when analyzing state behaviour and international results.

On the other hand, Constructivism emphasizes the role of ideas, norms, and shared meanings in shaping social behaviour and political outcomes. It argues that individuals and groups construct their social reality through the interpretation and application of shared meanings and norms. In this context, constructivists argue that ideas and norms play a critical role in shaping state behaviour, international institutions, and the overall architecture of the international system.

In this regard, the GSI concept paper reflects China's cultural values and identity as a peace-loving nation. As Qin Yaqing, Chinese foreign policy is rooted in its history, culture, and national identity, which emphasize the importance of harmony, peaceful coexistence, and mutual respect (Yaqing, 2005). These values are reflected in the GSI principles of mutual respect, openness and inclusion, and mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. As Chinese scholar Zhang Yongjin argues, China's rise challenges the Western-dominated international order, which is based on Western norms and values. Therefore, China seeks to promote a more diverse and inclusive global order, in which non-Western countries have a greater say in global governance (Zhang, 2008). The GSI's emphasis on coordination and sound interactions among major countries reflects this desire for a more equal and inclusive global order.

The GSI's emphasis on multilateralism, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation reflects China's growing identity as a responsible stakeholder in the international system. According to Yan Xuetong, China's rise has been accompanied by a shift in its identity from a "weak power" to a "responsible power" that seeks to contribute to global governance and regional stability (Xuetong, 2013). The GSI's emphasis on UN-centered security governance and coordination among major countries demonstrates China's desire to work with other actors to address global challenges and maintain regional order.

This valorisation of a more multilateral system can be evidenced for example in the Global Security Initiative's own concept paper, which calls for a greater financial role for the African Union in the execution of its peacekeeping mission in Africa; also defends the role of ASEAN as a regional platform to maintain peace and stability in the Southeast Asian region; and, as mentioned before, a global system based on the role of the UN, which is seen as an authority and as a means for global governance and peacekeeping.

The GSI's emphasis on holistic security governance and addressing conventional and non-traditional security concerns reflects China's notion that security is about more than simply military might and includes social, economic, and environmental elements. This approach aligns with constructivist ideas about how actors' beliefs and identities shape their understanding of security threats and their responses to them. For example, the GSI's focus on combating terrorism, safeguarding data security, and promoting scientific and technological cooperation reflects China's belief that non-military threats are becoming increasingly important in the 21st century.

The importance of mutual respect and openness in the GSI reflects China's attempts to foster a more inclusive and equitable international order. However, constructivists would argue that norms are not fixed and universal but rather subject to interpretation and contestation. Therefore, the success of the GSI depends not only on China's ability to promote its norms and values but also on the willingness of other actors to accept and internalize them.

Another relevant point to be addressed in a constructivist analysis is the international image that China starts to hold after the implementation of GSI. With the implementation of this project, China intends to assume a more responsible posture on the international scene. An example of this was the intermediation of a dialogue between Iran and Saudi Arabia, countries that had not been in contact for over five years and which are very important in the geopolitics of the Middle East, thus giving some hope for a peace agreement in Yemen. In the same line of thought, after the announcement of the peace plan for the Russia-Ukraine conflict, several European leaders such as the Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, the French President Emmanuel Macron and the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen (note that the last two visited China at the same time, but the media did not cover the visit of the President of the European Commission as much) visited China to better understand the Chinese position on the conflict and also for their bilateral relations.

From a Western perspective through the lens of Constructivism, the material structure of the GSI is not the main cause of distress for the West. Instead, it is the ideational structure of the initiative that causes concerns for Western states. As Wendt argues, the ideational structure of international relations, which includes norms, identities, and ideas, shapes state behavior and can have a significant impact on international outcomes.

The metaphor of nuclear weapons from the UK versus nuclear weapons from North Korea helps illustrate this point. While the material structure of the weapons may be similar, the ideational structure surrounding them is vastly different. Nuclear weapons from the UK are generally seen as legitimate and necessary for defense by Western states, whereas nuclear weapons from North Korea are seen as a threat to international security and a violation of norms surrounding nuclear weapons (Theys, 2017).

Similarly, the ideational structure of the GSI, which emphasizes the importance of traditional Chinese culture and values, is perceived as a challenge to Western values and norms. This is particularly true for the United States, which has long been known for liberal democracy and individual rights. The emphasis on collectivism and Confucian values in the GSI is seen as incompatible with these Western values.

In conclusion, the GSI reflects China's cultural values and identity as a peace-loving nation, and its desire for a more equal, inclusive, and harmonious global order. While realism emphasizes material factors such as power and security interests, constructivism highlights the importance of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping a state's foreign policy. Therefore, the GSI can be seen as a reflection of China's cultural identity and its desire for a more diverse and inclusive global order, based on dialogue, mutual respect, and cooperation.

4.3 Moral Realist analysis

The GSI's approach to global security governance appears to be compatible with both Realism and Moral Realism from Yan Xuetong's perspective. On the one hand, the GSI's emphasis on upholding the UN's central role in security governance and promoting coordination among major countries aligns with Realist notions of balancing power and preventing any one state from dominating the international system. Additionally, the GSI's focus on tackling traditional and non-traditional security challenges through the peaceful settlement of disputes and cooperation among various security visions is consistent with the Realist belief that states must work together to maintain global stability and security.

From a traditional Realist perspective, the GSI's emphasis on multilateralism and cooperation among major powers might be seen as an attempt by China to establish a

world order that benefits its interests, since it no longer feels that the current order can no longer accommodate its growing interests. According to Realist scholar John Mearsheimer, states are inherently aggressive and seek to maximize their power in a system where there is no global authority to restrain them (Mearsheimer, 1994). Thus, states are likely to pursue policies that enhance their power, including military alliances, arms races, and territorial expansion.

In this context, the GSI's emphasis on promoting global strategic stability and opposing arms races might be seen as an attempt by China to prevent the United States from dominating the international system. Realists would argue that China is pursuing a strategy of "balancing" against the United States, by building up its own military capabilities and forming alliances with other major powers, such as Russia.

However, it is worth noting that some Realist scholars, such as Kenneth Waltz, have argued that the international system is inherently stable because states are rational actors that seek to preserve the status quo (Waltz, 1987). In this view, China's pursuit of a stable and peaceful world order through the GSI might be seen as consistent with the logic of the international system.

From a Morgenthauian perspective, the GSI can be viewed as a potential way for China to achieve its interests and secure its position in the international system. Morgenthau emphasized the importance of power politics and the balance of power in maintaining international stability. In this sense, the GSI's emphasis on promoting coordination among major countries and facilitating peaceful settlement of hotspot issues through dialogue can be seen as a way for China to assert its influence and promote stability without resorting to military force.

Moreover, Morgenthau believed that states should pursue their interests in a way that maximizes their power and security. The GSI's call for strengthening the system and capacity for global security governance can be interpreted as a way for China to increase its influence and shape the international system to its advantage. Additionally, the GSI's emphasis on mutual respect and inclusion can be seen as a way for China to project a positive image of itself and build alliances with other countries.

However, it is important to note that Morgenthau's realism is often associated with a narrow focus on power politics and the pursuit of national interests without regard for moral considerations, and this is where Yan Xuetong's moral realism comes into play.

Yan Xuetong's Moral Realism provides a different perspective on China's approach to the GSI. Xuetong argues that states should pursue their interests in a way that is both self-interested and morally responsible (Wang, 2019). In this sense, China's promotion of dialogue and peaceful settlement of disputes through the GSI might be seen as a reflection of its commitment to moral principles such as respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states.

On the other hand, Yan Xuetong's Moral Realism emphasizes the importance of moral principles in international politics, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states. The GSI's principle of mutual respect aligns with this moral principle, as it stresses the importance of respecting the core interests of all countries and the legitimate security concerns of all parties. The GSI's principle of win-win cooperation also aligns with Yan Xuetong's emphasis on pursuing self-interest in a way that contributes to the common good and opposes zero-sum games that benefit one state at the expense of others.

Furthermore, the GSI's holistic approach to security governance, which seeks to eliminate the breeding ground for insecurity and achieve sustainable security through equal emphasis on security and development, is also consistent with Yan Xuetong's Moral Realism. He argues that states should pursue their interests in a way that is both self-interested and morally responsible, taking into account the long-term interests of all parties involved.

Overall, the GSI's approach to global security governance appears to be a potential way for China to achieve a Chinese world order that is compatible with both Realism and Moral Realism. By promoting multilateralism, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation, China can work towards a more stable and secure international system while also adhering to moral principles that emphasize the importance of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states.

4.4 Case Study Analysis: The 12 points for peace in Ukraine

The case study of the peace plan presented by China as a solution to the Ukraine-Russia conflict serves as a good example for the culmination of the three theories already used in the analysis. The twelve points can even be seen as one of the consequences of the

Global Security Initiative, representing a change in Chinese foreign policy and how it sees the world. And each theory can present a different angle on why this plan was put forward and the points themselves.

From the perspective of All Under Heaven theory within Culturalist theory, the analysis of the presentation of this plan is no different from the analysis made to GSI, referring to the idea of a unified and harmonious world where all civilizations can coexist and interact peacefully; the proposal of the Chinese government seems, in a way, an attempt to uphold this ideal.

As aforementioned discussed, States are considered as actors in culturalist theory, moulded by their different cultures and conventions. As a result, the Chinese government's proposed peace plan may be interpreted as a representation of its cultural values and traditions. Likewise, the concept of "All Under Heaven" might be seen as an invitation to China to start taking other responsibilities in fostering world peace and cooperation. This reflects China's rising confidence and power on the international scene.

On top of that, the notion of "All Under Heaven" highlights the significance of mutual respect and understanding among many cultures. This may explain why China's peace plan emphasizes the need of all sides respecting each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, a key theme in Chinese foreign policy. From this vantage point, China's suggestion might be interpreted as an attempt to establish a new model of international relations based on mutual respect and collaboration rather than conflict and dominance.

Analysing China's suggestion of the peace plan to end the conflict between Russia and Ukraine through the lens of constructivism can also provide slightly different insights into why China took this action. According to constructivism, ideas, norms, and values shape the behaviour of states in international relations. Therefore, understanding the values that China holds, such as the importance of international law and the role of the United Nations, can help to explain why it proposed the peace plan.

China's commitment to international law is evident in its proposal for respecting the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of all countries involved in the conflict. This commitment is consistent with China's stance on global governance, which is based on the principles of multilateralism and respect for international law. China has been a strong advocate for the United Nations and the importance of its role in maintaining international peace and security. As a permanent member of the UN Security

Council, China's approach to conflict resolution is based on the principles of dialogue, diplomacy, and peaceful negotiations. Therefore, it is not surprising that China suggested a peace plan that emphasizes the need to respect international law and the UN Charter's goals and principles.

Furthermore, the peace plan calls for abandoning the Cold War mentality and pursuing shared, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security. This reflects the constructivist idea that identities and norms can evolve over time and that states can construct new identities through their actions. By promoting the idea of shared security, China is constructing a new identity as a peace-making state that seeks to foster cooperation and collaboration among all countries, promoting a vision of itself as a responsible actor committed to the principles of the United Nations, and seeking to establish itself as a regional and global power that is respected and accepted by others.

By presenting the peace plan, China is positioning itself as a responsible and proactive actor in promoting peaceful conflict resolution. Something that can be seen and evidenced in the latest UN meetings, especially in matters involving the war in Ukraine (at the time of writing). In February, at the time of the resolution "for an immediate end to the War", China was one of the thirty-two countries to abstain, but in May, in a resolution that was not directly about the war, but rather about cooperation between the UN and the Council of Europe, but which explicitly acknowledged "the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, China had voted in favour, not abstaining, something that, although it cannot be the object of a definitive judgement on the Chinese position, has not failed to merit attention in the international media spotlight. (Euronews, 2023)

In addition, constructivism emphasizes the importance of norms and values in determining state behaviour. China's emphasis on shared, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security reflects its aim to establishing a community with a shared destiny for humanity. This global government model is founded on the Confucian philosophical principle of mutual benefit and cooperation. A peaceful society, according to this thinking, may be attained through supporting the well-being of all members of the community. As a result, China's suggestion for a peace plan, which emphasizes the need to avoid seeking one's own security at the price of others' security and to work for Eurasian Continent peace and stability, indicates its commitment to this global governance vision.

From a realist perspective however, states are primarily motivated by their own interests, which often involve maximizing power and security. In the case of China's presentation of a peace plan in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, this can be understood as a way for China to promote its own interests.

One possible explanation for China's actions is that it sees an opportunity to increase its influence in the region by presenting itself as a mediator and peacemaker. China has a growing economic and strategic interest in the region, and by presenting a peace plan, it may be seeking to establish itself as a key player in regional politics.

Following the thread presented especially in the last paragraph, it is important to note that the situation in Ukraine causes a certain interesting constraint to China, this is because according to statistics from Ukraine's State Statistics Service, China surpassed Russia to become the country's largest single trading partner in 2019, with total trade totalling \$18.98 billion last year, an almost 80% increase from 2013. But above all, it should be noted that Ukraine is a key component of the Belt and Road Initiative, which Kyiv joined in 2017. The two sides struck an agreement in 2020 to expand cooperation in sectors such as infrastructure finance and building. Since then, major Chinese corporations such as state food behemoth COFCO Corp (CNCOF.UL), state-run builders China Pacific Construction Group and China Harbour Engineering Co (CHEC), and telecommunications gear giant Huawei Technologies (HWT.UL) have established operations in Ukraine. The war in Ukraine also impacted the direct route from Changsha in China's Hunan province to Chop in Western Ukraine, as well as the Xian-Budapest line, which runs via Kyiv and is currently "dead."

The suggestion of a peace plan in Ukraine would however not only have immediate economic effects for China, but also in the future for its relations with Europe. This is not least because after the announcement of the "partnership without limits" between the Kremlin and Beijing, the Europeans' eyes towards the Chinese have changed. Ursula von der Leyen said: "How China continues to interact with Putin's war will be a determining factor for EU-China relations going forward. According to the realist perspective, a peace-seeking position in Europe may soften the way some Europeans view China, thus seeking to counterbalance the more favourable position of a pro-American narrative of the conflict.

5.0 Conclusion

As I researched and wrote this thesis, I came across the most diverse forms of thought, and I became aware (even more than before) that there is thought beyond Europe. Ever since I was a child, at Portuguese school, we used to talk about the achievements of my ancestors and their explorations of the undiscovered, uncertain world. The western world and the history written by Europe was always what was taught in school, with little mention of other parts of the world. In a way, it was as if there was no life beyond the area where I lived. By joining this Masters, I had the opportunity to realise that there was thought beyond my intellectual horizon, from the works of Duke of Zhou to the mythical travels of Zheng He.

In fact, the world we live in today is a different world from the one we knew 10 years ago, or even 5, or even 2. In international relations we learn the constant mutation at its core and that theories of the "end of history" are little more than semi-utopias, because after all, humans are not the same anywhere.

In this thesis I aimed to explain why the Global Security Initiative might indicate a possible Chinese world order, coupled with its inevitable adjacent issues. As it turns out, in the course of my research I realised that I can answer this question in lots of different ways.

I have understood, above all, the great power that exists in the West to pull a narrative not necessarily of confrontation but of antagonisation towards those who suggest changing norms on the international scene. It reminded me a bit of the famous American 'Rocky' saga where if Rocky fights, then there has to be a villain fighting him; seemingly adapted to international relations, the US very much wants China to play the role of Ivan Drago.

But the truth is that analysing the world through the eyes of Thucydides' Peloponnesian war seems somewhat inappropriate, or rather, it seems to overlook the variables that make up today's world, since we do not have Sparta and Athens as international actors. Clausewitz had spoken of the concept of the "total war", which can be metaphorically understood as European chess, where all resources are used to fight the last battle; but the reality is that there is always tomorrow, and the world cannot be made up of winners and losers, but rather as a community of single destiny, even with its cultural differences. Thucydides analyses the rise of a power and the challenge it poses to the established order,

but Thucydides did not count on the immense variables that today's world counts. Nowadays the system is not about just winning or losing, nor nothing is just black or just white, there are a lot of gray areas within and variables that in some sense constrain them. As the Japanese philosopher Miyamoto Musashi wrote in the famous "Book of Five Rings", 'there is more than one way to reach the top of the mountain', and likewise, there is more than one way to live and to ascend together in the international system.

In a way, it seems unequivocal to me to look at GSI as a way of challenging the west, as it also seems wrong to look at the initiative as a way of replacing the liberal order established by the US. The world, through initiatives like this, becomes more multipolar than ever, and an inherent need for a confrontation between global powers. After writing this project, I conclude that the GSI and its adjacent initiatives will not dominate the globe, because that does not seem to me to be the goal, but rather to create a world where other groups of international actors will have more strength, as exemplified through the Chinese idiom "A single flower does not make spring, while on hundred flowers in full bloom bring spring to the garden". If through the "All Under Heaven Theory" and the Constructivist thesis it was possible to understand that culture influences the way foreign policy is made and that identity norms can be changed as the final objective, making it all seem somewhat idealistic, the Moral Realist perspective brings us back to earth to show the interests of the various states when suggestions such as those evidenced throughout the project are made. It seems the typical case where "one hand can wash the other hand".

Sun Tzu said in his celebrated "Art of War", the "The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.", and here I seek to remove the term "enemy" from the phrase and focus on the philosophy of the non-need to fight in a war constituting the supreme art of belligerence. It seems, at the end of this thesis, that this is the goal of Chinese foreign policy, to ascend in a peaceful way, respecting the most varied cultures in the international sphere. As Confucius said, "All the People within the Four Seas Are Brothers", and thus should respect each other in all panoramas of the universe.

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