

# **Chinese Foreign Policy: The Rhetoric Shift from Keeping Low Profile to Assertiveness**

**Bachelor Thesis**

**Thesis supervisor:**  
**Mgr. Ing. Richard Turcsányi, Ph.D**

**Thesis author:**  
**Kamil Liškutín**

**Brno 2017**

## **Acknowledgement**

On the academic level, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Mgr. Ing. Richard Turcsányi, Ph.D. His mentoring and guidance represented an essential support during writing the bachelor thesis. Additionally, I would like to emphasize his efforts to be helpful even though he was preoccupied with his academic commitments.

On the personal level, I would like to thank my parents for their patience and moral support. Moreover, I would like to express special thanks to my friend, Daniela Fejtová, whose help and contribution I appreciate.

**Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled **Chinese Foreign Policy: The Rhetoric Shift from Keeping Low Profile to Assertiveness** was written and completed solely by me. I also declare that all the sources and information used to complete the thesis are included in the list of references. I agree that the thesis is made public in accordance with Article 47b of Act No. 111/1998 Coll., Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments and Supplements to Some Other Acts (the Higher Education Act), and in accordance with the current *Directive on publishing of final thesis*.

I am aware that my thesis is written in accordance with Act. 121/2000 Coll. on Copyright, and therefore Mendel University in Brno has the right to conclude license agreements on the utilization of the thesis as school work in accordance with Article 60(1) of the Copyright Act.

Before concluding a license agreement on utilization of the work by another person, I will request a written statement from the university that the license agreement is not in contradiction to legitimate interests of the university, and I will also pay a prospective fee to cover the cost incurred in creating the work to the full amount of such costs.

In Brno on \_\_\_\_\_

## **Abstract**

The goal of the thesis is to answer the question whether the new leader, Xi Jinping, has indeed moved away from more low profile oriented strategy. The first part deals with both theoretical and methodological background. The second part uses the background to answer the question via speech comparison and analysis in terms of speech coding. Moreover, the results are tested so as to challenge certain findings resulting from speech comparison due to possible errors.

## **Keywords**

Speech, coding, low-profile, pro-active, foreign policy style, win-win policy, core-interests, assertive China.

## **Abstrakt**

Cílem této práce je odpovědět na otázku, zda se nový vůdce, Xi Jinping, vskutku vzdálil od nízko-profilové strategie Číny. První část se zabývá teoretickým i metodologickým zázemím. Druhá část práce vychází z poznatků z první části k zodpovězení otázky práce pomocí analýzy a následného porovnávání proslovů prezidentu z hlediska kódování řeči. Výsledky jsou navíc testovány tak, aby zpochybňovaly určité poznatky vyplývající z porovnání proslovů v důsledku možných chyb.

## **Klíčová slova**

Proslov, kódování, nízký profil, proaktivní styl zahraniční politiky, politika win-win, klíčové zájmy, asertivní Čína.

# Content

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1	Research issue .....	7
1.2	Aim of the research.....	8
1.3	Contribution to the field .....	9
<b>2</b>	<b>Theory</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1	Keeping a low profile .....	11
2.1.1	Tao Guang Yang Hui becoming a guiding principle .....	12
2.1.2	Peaceful Rise .....	13
2.2	Striving for achievement .....	15
2.2.1	Bigger emphasis on Chinese national interests – “Core Interests” .....	19
2.2.2	Political orientation over the economic one.....	20
2.2.3	Undertaking responsibility.....	21
<b>3</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1	Speeches .....	23
3.1.1	The G20 .....	24
3.1.2	The United Nations.....	25
3.1.3	The Boao Forum .....	26
3.2	Codes .....	27
<b>4</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>29</b>
4.1	Quantitative results .....	29
4.2	Qualitative observations.....	30
4.2.1	The “softening strategy” .....	31
4.2.2	Reform and leadership tendencies.....	32
4.2.3	Additional observations .....	34
<b>5</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>References</b>	<b>42</b>

## List of figures<sup>1</sup>

<b>Fig. 1</b>	<b>Segment of a coded speech created in ATLAS.TI</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Fig. 2</b>	<b>Peacekeeping Contributions by Country obtained from CSIS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Fig. 3</b>	<b>Quantitative results created in Microsoft Excel</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Fig. 4</b>	<b>Number of mentioning terms “financial” and “economic*” by Hu Jintao as generated by AntConc</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Fig. 5</b>	<b>Number of mentioning terms “financial” and “economic*” by Xi Jinping as generated by AntConc</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Fig. 6</b>	<b>Quantitative correlation between terms “development” and “economic*” in Hu Jintao’s speeches as generated by AntConc</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Fig. 7</b>	<b>Quantitative correlation between terms “development” and “economic*” in Xi Jinping’s speeches as generated by AntConc</b>	<b>36</b>

---

<sup>1</sup> All tables but Fig. 2 have been done by the author himself and generated by AntConc, Excel or ATLAS.TI

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Research issue

Since the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) more than six decades ago in 1949, Chinese foreign policy has gone through a number of phases marked by varying perceptions and ambitions of its leaders (Jeffrey Bader, 2016, p. 1). The People's Republic of China's (PRC) domestic goals have, for that matter, always been strongly linked to Chinese foreign policy style (D. S. Rajan, 2013).

July 1977, when Deng Xiaoping<sup>2</sup> returned from his political exile and became China's leader, marks the second communist era revolution widely known as the reform era. The reform era represented an enormous change in several areas, as it marked transition from planned economy to market economy, and hence from independent, self-sufficient (autarkic) economy to a more interconnected economy essentially based on a less intellectually closed system and striving towards a more globalized framework in that regard (Lampton, 2013, p. 5). Deng's "reforms and opening-up" policies reshaped Chinese diplomacy, and integrated China into the international arena while maintaining a "low profile" by setting China onto a path of peaceful development. For long, the essence of Deng Xiaoping's teaching dominated China's diplomacy and for decades this diplomacy remained risk-averse, cautious, and chiefly peaceful while focusing on the economic development (Erwin Blaauw, 2013, p. 1).

Since the beginning of the 21st century and leadership under the president Hu Jintao, Beijing has articulated its foreign policy in terms of peaceful development: a concept originally created by Zheng Bijian and soon enough recognized as the guiding principle. The concept is based on virtues of peace and cooperation by rejecting old, realist understanding of the world and introducing brand-new win-win solutions instead of outdated zero-sum games (having everyone win instead of having just one winner). This has allowed for creation of a stable and peaceful environment for Chinese development in general (Jian Zhang, 2015, p. 4).

Now, after years of adherence to Deng Xiaoping's teaching and the peaceful development concept, Beijing has managed to rebuild burned bridges. China's economic power has skyrocketed (Erwin Blaauw, 2013, p. 1) and so has China's international role. Thus, it is safe to say that in the past four decades China has considerably evolved (Mikael Weissmann, 2015, p. 151). It is no longer an isolated country, but on the contrary a country with increasing foreign influence that may not be disregarded.

---

<sup>2</sup> All Chinese and other Asian names in the thesis will be romanized, i.e., will be written according to how they appear in the international context.

Global financial crisis in 2008 is often identified as the turning point in modern history of China. China's remarkable recovery from such a blow has established this country as the second biggest economy in the world (Michael D. Swaine, 2010, p.1). This is the reason why the world has started paying much more attention to China and its foreign relations (Mikael Weissmann, 2015, p. 151). However, it is equally important to note that the carefully crafted image of the risk-averse, cautious, peaceful, and low-profile country was in crisis soon after. In November 2012, China registered a new transition in power. Xi Jinping became the chairman of the People's Republic of China. While Beijing still adheres to its established and long upheld low-profile strategy as set by Deng Xiaoping and peaceful development theory as introduced by president Hu Jintao, it is widely recognized that ever since Xi Jinping's rise to power there have been major changes in Chinese foreign relations.

Unlike his predecessor, Xi Jinping has not so far paid attention to the low-profile strategy. Instead, he is keen on Chinese national rejuvenation, as he sees China as a major power that should behave accordingly. That is particularly visible in the manner how firm China has become on safeguarding its sovereignty, particularly so in the South China Sea. Hence, terms such as "assertive" and "aggressive" have come to dominate Chinese foreign policy discourse over the last several years. In that respect, "assertive China" discourse has become widespread among international observers ever since (Erwin Blaauw, 2013, p. 2). With that being said, newly popular and very assertive narrative has caused many speculations among both politicians and leaders in China and abroad. This new, much more confident, and additionally anti-status quo (Michael D. Swaine, 2010, p. 1) mindset of Chinese officials has caused many to think that China has abandoned the "low-profile" strategy and adopted a more pro-active approach (Yaqing Qin, 2014). Thus, Beijing's commitment to a peaceful and low-profile development has begun to be seriously questioned.

## **1.2 Aim of the research**

In recent years, the People's Republic of China has attracted much attention within the international community. Chinese rise on the international stage is considered to be perhaps one of the most important changes in international politics since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Post-global crisis development in 2008 has put China into an even more advantageous position. Now the world's second largest economy and a rising military power, China has come to a position of influencing international affairs significantly. However, it is equally important to say, especially in the light of recent events, that China's growing international influence has also raised concerns among many international observers. Some of these believe that recent Chinese behavior under the leadership of Xi Jinping has become significantly more pro-active. Hence, an "assertive China" discourse has started to emerge in the wake of recent Chinese actions on the global stage,



together with voiced concerns and behavior of a new generation of Chinese leaders. As the name suggests, the fundamental element of the discourse is the claim that there has been a shift away from Deng Xiaoping's teaching of "keeping a low profile," and that Chinese officials have replaced Deng Xiaoping's dictum with an increasingly assertive approach to foreign affairs.

Aim of this thesis is to shed light on this particular issue. Hence, this thesis aims to answer the question whether the new leader, Xi Jinping, has indeed moved away from Beijing's more low-profile and reserved strategy as defined by his predecessor Hu Jintao.

### **1.3 Contribution to the field**

China has coped with foreign affairs almost unnoticeably over the past few decades. The country has, however, also become more mature and has grown in strength at the same time. Having over one billion people and being one of the biggest economies in modern times, China has gradually shifted its sights towards the global arena. Hence, the country is certainly a power to be reckoned with, of course when taking into consideration the rise Beijing has witnessed in recent decades. Nevertheless, the country has also been accused of overstepping its boundaries, particularly in the light of its increased activity at various international summits, allegedly insulting behavior at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, supposed mistreatment of the US President Barak Obama during his visit in 2009, and impugment of the US dollar as the international reserve currency (Michael D. Swaine, 2010 p. 3). As such, this is a topic that has attracted considerable attention worldwide, and, given the degree of importance of the topic and also the fact that it has been brought into public eye on a number of occasions, it is worthy to explore it in more detail.

Many international authors have researched the topic or topics and issues closely related to it. For instance, Jian Zhang (2015) or Justyna Szczudlik based their research on examining various policies and aspects of the new Chinese leadership in terms of its policy of assertiveness. In addition, Richard Turcsányi (2016) wrote his doctoral thesis on the very same issue. His work is chiefly dedicated to exploration of China's behavior in the South China Sea in the light of the aforementioned power shifts.

However, there have been but a few studies based solely on speech analysis only. Michael D. Swaine (2013), for instance, analyzed speeches of the former Chinese president, Hu Jintao, at the National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012 (held once in every five years). In addition, yet another volume by Michael D. Swaine (2015) was published and it centered on Xi Jinping's speeches. In this work, Michael D. Swaine analyzed an official compilation of current Chinese President's speeches and talks related to the country's governance. In this compilation, that is, by the way, entitled *The Governance of China, Xi Jinping*

addressed major foreign policy topics that were subsequently analyzed by Michael D. Swaine.

As already hinted above, there is a substantial difference between intention and actual behavior. And although both actions and words are good sources to categorize one's intentions, they do not always have to match. Furthermore, there is little to no research in terms of speeches comparison at same events. Hence, This thesis strives to contribute to the understanding of Chinese foreign policy shift based on comparative techniques and discourse analysis of the two most recent China's presidents.

## 2 Theory

### 2.1 Keeping a low profile

It was due to Tiananmen Square incident in 1989 that economic sanctions were imposed on China by the West. This incident, together with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, disintegration of the former Soviet 'empire' in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s, and finally dissolution of bipolar international system and the end of the Cold War marked the end of an era in international affairs (Cheng & Zhan, 1998, p. 99). The term 'Tao Guang Yang Hui' first emerged in the early 1990s and has evolved ever since.

The origins of the phrase, Tao Guang Yang Hui, are rooted in Deng Xiaoping speeches and talks. In the midst of sudden changes, Deng Xiaoping advocated that China should observe, should secure its position, and also cope with issues/problems calmly. However, there is almost no evidence that Deng Xiaoping actually used the phrase Tao Guang Yang Hui in his speeches. Nevertheless, the meaning of the theory remained clear (Chen & Wang, 2011, p. 264).

Deng Xiaoping stated during his speech on 4 September 1989: "In short, my views about the international situation can be summed up in three sentences. First, we should observe the situation coolly. Second, we should hold our ground. Third, we should act calmly. Don't be impatient" (Deng, 1989). The only instance when Deng Xiaoping used the term Tao Guang Yang Hui (TGYH) was in 1992. It was during his "Southern Sojourn" that he said: "We will only become a big political power if we keep a low profile (taoguang yanghui) and work hard for some years; and we will then have more weight in international affairs" (Chubb, 2012). Moreover, during his speech on 4 December 1990 he articulated a further set of principles, the so-called Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, that China is to follow in the international environment.

Eventually, Joseph Yu-Shek Cheng and Franklin Wankun Zhan in their work (1999) briefly summarized Deng Xiaoping's strategy, the Tao Guang Yang Hui approach, into the following values:

- observe and analyze calmly
- secure position
- deal patiently and confidently
- never become a leader
- conceal capabilities and avoid the limelight
- be good at keeping a low profile
- strive to make an achievement

But, what is the exact meaning of the aforementioned phrase? In the Chinese-English dictionary, the idiom is translated as “hide one’s capabilities and bide one’s time.” Hence, many Western observers believed that China had some malicious intentions to secretly accumulate enough power so that one day it could dominate the whole region (GlobalSecurity, 2013).

However, as Wang Zaibang argued (2010), this is a rather tricky idiom. In his research, he came to a more accurate translation. After a more careful translation, he found that in Chinese ‘tao’ means “to hide” in English, ‘guang’ means “bright, light, and advantage,” ‘yang’ translates as “to grow up,” and ‘hui’ can be translated as “darkness, or disadvantage and shortage.” Thus, perhaps a much better insight into the intended meaning of the idiom is to “hide one’s advantage and to improve one’s disadvantage.”

Wang Zaibang (2010) then explained that the phrase came from Confucian “Doctrine of the Mean.” This, therefore, opens new possibilities for translation. “To do what you are capable of, and to prevent overreaching oneself” would be one of these new possibilities. Furthermore, Wang elaborated that the phrase had a direct impact on Chinese foreign policy in terms of China refusing the idea of being a “free rider” and wanting to make a contribution within its capacities.

### **2.1.1 Tao Guang Yang Hui becoming a guiding principle**

It is at this point already clear where Tao Guang Yang Hui or more commonly Keeping a Low-Profile strategy actually originate. However, what remains to be answered is when did this principle become the guiding principle of Chinese foreign policy? Joseph Yu-Shek Dingding Chen and Jianwei Wang argue that there is no conclusive evidence in this respect. Instead, they offer two possible explanations. It is, on the one hand, possible that Deng Xiaoping’s speech carrying Tao Guang Yang Hui spirit was gradually accepted by Chinese leaders. Or, on the other hand, it is quite possible that the principle got a significant push forward by Jiang Zemin. The first reference directly connected to TGYH by other Chinese leaders was in Jiang Zemin’s speech in 1991. Then, the same phrase found its way into his 1995 speech where President Jiang Zemin added a phrase “get some things done” in addition to the aforementioned TGYH phrase. Later on, in 1998 exactly, President Jiang Zemin described Chinese foreign policy in the following manner: “Observe calmly, cope with affairs calmly, never seek leadership, hide brightness and cherish obscurity, get some things done” (Chen & Wang, 2011, p. 264-265).

President Jiang Zemin’s promotion of the Tao Guang Yang Hui strategy throughout the 1990s as stated in the paragraph above has resulted in Chinese strategic consistency for years to come (GlobalSecurity, 2013). By the start of the new century, increasing number of scholars, officials, and Chinese leaders began to recognize and use Tao Guang Yang term to describe Chinese policy in international affairs. With the beginning of the 21 century, Tao Guang Yang Hui (TGYH) has

become the guiding principle and thus central for Chinese foreign policy (Chen & Wang, 2011, p. 265).

### **2.1.2 Peaceful Rise**

President Hu Jintao, much like his predecessors, devised several policy formulations and concepts, and the so-called “Peaceful Development” foreign policy is one of them. This concept was created out of necessity, but still it remained profoundly linked to Deng Xiaoping’s teaching of peace, development, and stability as the key principles of Chinese foreign policy.

As Bonnie S. Glaser highlighted, the Peaceful Rise is a product of a continuous evolution of Chinese foreign policy over the last two and more decades. As Chinese foreign policy, starting with Deng Xiaoping of course, opened to the international arena and increased its interactions with the outside world, Chinese leaders, politicians, and officials became increasingly aware of the importance of perceptions of China in the international community. To put it differently, China understood its impact, as Evan S. Medeiros pointed out, on the “security dilemma” game (Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, 2007, p. 292).

During the 1990s immediately after the Tiananmen Square accident, China tried to improve foreign perceptions of itself. However, after the Mischief Reef action in 1995, or, in addition, missile tests in Taiwan, those attempts by Beijing to redeem itself were in all honesty absolutely futile (Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, 2007, p. 293). In addition to Chinese influence globally rising, its economy was also rapidly increasing and with it its growing demand for energy. International community voiced its concerns about the future of China as the next super power (Zheng Bijian, 2005). Yet again in attempts to repair its international image and reinsure its neighboring countries in Asia about its peaceful intentions, China reintroduced the concept of Peaceful Rise.

The origins of the term Peaceful Rise are linked to Zheng Bijian’s trip to the United States (Jian Zhang, 2015, p. 2). Bijian and his delegation met United States officials to discuss American views on the increasing Chinese impact on the “security dilemma” dynamics in Asia and Beijing’s overall role in foreign affairs (Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, 2007, p. 294). It was during this visit that Zheng Bijian came to realize that there was polarized, and even negative perception, of China and its behavior, potentially even leading to worsening relations between the two countries. After the visit, Zheng Bijian created a report about his concerns on negative American views on Chinese rise in Asia. This was the first time that the exact term ‘Chinese rise’ was used. More specifically, it was Zheng Bijian who spoke of “the development path of Chinese peaceful rise” (Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, 2007, p. 294).

In November 2003, Zheng Bijian delivered a speech during the Boao Forum for Asia. This speech is considered official appearance of the 'Peaceful rise' concept. In his speech, Zheng Bijian went into detail in explaining the idea behind the concept and spoke of this idea as "not only a path of striving for the rise but also a path of adhering to peace and never seeking hegemony" (Samuel Onyegam, 2008, p. 91).

Based on Zheng Bijian's views, the peaceful rise can be summarized into these core principles. First of all, China has to take necessary steps in formulating new economic and political reforms in order to foster growth and stability of its socialist market economy and socialist democracy, which would create institutional framework for the peaceful rise. Secondly, China has to create a harmony between different sectors of its economy by ensuring harmonious and even development in its economy, society, and culture, in both rural and urban areas, different regions of the country, and also in general between man and nature. This is the way to establish an environment to support Chinese rise (Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, 2007, p. 295). Second of Zheng Bijian's core principles exemplifies a direct reference to yet another Hu Jintao's policy, the so-called Scientific Development Outlook.

In modern history, some fast-emerging countries on their way to becoming great powers exploited other countries' natural resources through colonialism, invasions, or wars of aggression (Zheng Bijian, 2005). Zheng Bijian acknowledged that. Nevertheless, according to him, Peaceful rise stands for the idea that even during Chinese pursuit of further economic development and a will to raise standards of living to achieve a "well-off society," China would not destabilize international order. Moreover, this particular refusal of both colonialism and imperialism highlight Chinese lack of desire for any sort of expansion internationally speaking. Instead, China would focus on building peace, mutual trust, and would also try to avoid any confrontation as to achieve a suitable, peaceful, and cooperative environment for itself (Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, 2016, p. 295).

After Zheng Bijian's introduction to Peaceful rise, Chinese officials gradually started using the term. In December 2003 during the 110th anniversary of the birth of Mao Zedong, Hu Jintao used the term himself. With many Chinese officials being present, Hu Jintao argued for China to follow the road of peaceful rise, fostering a peaceful environment using five principles of peaceful co-existence (Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, 2016, p. 298).

With time passing and the theory of peaceful rise having been adopted by Politburo's Standing Committee, Chinese leaders clarified the meaning of the theory as such. First of all, the focus was to be directed at Chinese own development in relation to the world peace. Secondly, China's rise was to be supplied by its own resources to avoid confrontational relations with other countries. Third, China could not accomplish such a goal alone, which meant that

maintaining the opening-up policy and cooperation with other nations remained vital. Fourthly, the rise of China could not be executed overnight. Hence, China's rise was in essence a long-term goal. And finally, China's rise would not be pursued at the expense of any other country's well-being (Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, 2016, p. 299).

However, the term peaceful development swiftly replaced the concept of peaceful rise, reason behind this being fear of Chinese's officials about the word "rise" as was originally formulated, chiefly due to neighboring countries having negative perceptions in this respect (Suisheng Zhao, 2014 – No idea where it is). On 24 April, Hi Jintao deliberately avoided the term peaceful rise and instead formulated the theory of peaceful development, which was later adopted by Politburo's Standing Committee. Moreover, in December 2005 first white paper on peaceful development, entitled "Chinese peaceful development road" was published (Bonnie S. Glaser and Evan S. Medeiros, 2007, p. 300).

## **2.2 Striving for achievement**

During the presidency of Hu Jintao, China followed the path of the "peaceful development." In these years, China maintained good relations with great powers, particularly the United States. At the same time, Beijing strengthened its relations with neighboring countries and other nations in the region (Mikael Weissmann, 2015, p. 160) and created a stable and peaceful environment for Chinese development. However, official Chinese Communist Party (CCP) stance has always been of the nature of not having just one single ideological line in accordance with Tao Guang Yang Hui (TGYH) as introduced by Deng Xiaoping (in both domestic and foreign policy).

The emergence of a more confident China has also introduced many heated debates regarding Chinese behavior and its commitment to the Tao Guang Yang Hui doctrine and the peaceful development principle. Some Western authors have even argued that new Chinese confidence almost bordered with arrogance (Chen & Wang, 2011, p. 262). Even on domestic level, many scholars have started doubting the relevance of the Tao Guang Yang Hui doctrine and even peaceful development, which, as has been shown, was not a novel strategy but rather a continuation of Deng Xiaoping's policy doctrine (Lukas K. Danner, 2015).

One of the most well-known scholars who devoted a considerable portion of his research to study of the assertive behavior of China is Michael Swaine. He has published several articles dealing with various aspects of Chinese assertiveness. In his article from 2010 he focused on perceptions and beliefs about Chinese assertiveness held by both Chinese and foreigners, particularly Americans.

Though his article does not provide factual assessment whether or to what degree China has actually shifted away from Deng Xiaoping's dictum, he provides several

reasons why Chinese foreign policy has been perceived as “triumphalist,” anti-Western, or simply having a “brush tone.” On the one hand, such behavior stems from growing Chinese confidence and pride, chiefly being attributed to a rather fast and successful recovery from the global financial crisis in 2008 and with it associated global shift in balance of power from the West to the East. In addition, there is the issue of growing Chinese insecurity. Increasing number of domestic protests, such as in Tibet and Xinjiang, endangering domestic stability has lead the Chinese leadership to take a more hostile stance toward foreign activity that might cause further unrest in these regions, particularly so in the case of foreign meetings with the Dalai Lama, for instance.

Hence in the eyes of Western observers, assertive Chinese behavior dates to 2008 and onwards. Starting with PM Wen Jiabao’s criticism of the United States for its economic mismanagement, impugment of the role of dollar as the international reserve currency, increased activity at international summits such as the G20, resistance to sanctions against Iran, allegedly insulting behavior at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, supposed mistreatment of President Barak Obama during his visit in 2009 (US decision to sell arms to Taiwan and for Barack Obama to meet with Dalai Lama) (Michael D. Swaine, 2010 p. 3).

However, Michael Swaine (2010) in his article claims that Chinese perception is more diverse. It even seems that Chinese officials themselves are of conflicting views. On the one hand, Hu Jintao’s speech (July 2009) at a national envoy meeting, where he called for the need keep a low profile and achieve something, highlighted the need to increase Chinese power and influence in the world (Masayuki Masuda, 2016). On the other hand, other Chinese officials have rejected the notion of assertive China. Moreover, they still stick to the idea that there is just one single ideological line of keeping a low-profile (Jason Buhi, 2014). Moreover, PM Wen Jiabao, to refute of motion of aggressive China, stated that regardless of being strong or weak, China remained a responsible development country on the path of peaceful development (Michael D. Swaine, 2010 p. 5).

Swaine in the end came to a conclusion that both Chinese and Western analysts agree on two things. First, they agree on the recent Chinese assertiveness. Second, both groups say that Chinese assertiveness will only rise as its interests and capabilities grow (Michael D. Swaine, 2010 p. 9).

Authors such as Chen Dingding and Wang Jianwei, for instance, produced a paper in 2011 by simply resuming where Michael Swaine ended in terms of addressing domestic perceptions of Chinese assertiveness. They concluded on an intense domestic level debate where two opposite camps argue whether it is time to change this low-profile foreign policy.

On the one hand, supporters of a more pro-active approach list several main reasons why they think Tao Guang Yang Hui (TGYH) should be abandoned. First, in



respect to Michael Swaine's arguments, China can no longer afford to 'lay low.' On the contrary, it actually needs to become more assertive in order to protect its national interests in the wake of its rising national power. And that is where TGYH actually shows considerable lacks. Second, they argue that TGYH was a policy of convenience (Tiananmen square). However, now the situation is different (Chen & Wang, 2011, p. 266-270).

On the other hand, advocates of TGYH have a different approach. First, they argue there is no guarantee that Chinese national power will keep rising and that the U.S. would not bounce back from its decline. Second, the TGYH is not a policy of convenience but a long-term strategy at that. They argue, therefore, that peaceful Chinese rise has not been completed yet. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao himself said that this policy needed to remain in effect for a century more in order for China to finish its rise in regards to a peaceful international environment it needs (Chen & Wang, 2011, p. 271-273).

In the end of their work (2011), Chen and Wang drew three conclusions. First, it appears that consensus is that China should still follow Deng Xiaoping's guiding principles but also become more pro-active at the same time. Second, the authors point out that the debates did not simply appear from thin air but rather resulted from the global shift of balance of power. Hence, it is not that China has suddenly decided to become more pro-active, but rather this has been its reaction to external developments. Third, it appears that it is top Chinese leadership that has actually supported low-profile strategy more than lower-tier Chinese officials.

Harvard professor Alastair Iain Johnston in his article (2013) is of that opinion that there has been only a modest increase in Chinese assertiveness. According to Johnston, many observers tend to underestimate the degree of China's assertiveness before 2010, and, at the same time, they exaggerate post-2010 events. This means that much of current Chinese diplomacy is within the boundaries already established. Johnston actually identified seven cases when Western analysts and media most often identified as prime examples of China acting in an assertive manner: Copenhagen conference on climate change, arms sales to Taiwan, Obama's meeting with the Dalai Lama, maritime claims over the South China Sea, tough stance against increased U.S. military presence in the Yellow Sea, Senkaku boat collision in disputed waters, and finally Chinese reaction towards Yeongpyeong Island incident (Richard Turcsányi, 2016, p. 22). Johnston then concludes that the aforementioned events do not sufficiently support the argument that China's foreign policy has indeed become assertive. All things being equal, as Johnston points out, it does not mean that China has not adopted a more pro-active approach in certain scenarios, such as, for instance, in regards to its maritime claims.

Qin Yaqing is of a similar opinion. Qin Yaqing acknowledges that there is a "assertive China" discourse since 2009 which grew on intensity when Xi Jinping

assumed power in 2012. At the same time, however, he concludes much of it is misleading. Qin argues it is mainly due to two kinds of bias – mechanical historical analogy and mechanical theoretical application. Where behind both bias is old way of thinking – political realism (Qin Yaqing, 2014).

Qin's main contribution to the discussion is his conclusion that the currently perceived shift in Chinese foreign policy can be understood as „continuity through change“. Qin states that the ultimate strategic objectives, overall strategic design and main policies will continue to remain constant. What represent the change is mainly the concept of core national interests. Therefore, Qin argues that important elements of both KLP and SFA strategies will continue to be present in China's diplomacy (Qin Yaqing, 2014).

In 2012, Xi Jinping assumed chairmanship of the PRC and became the new president of China. Since Xi Jinping has consolidated power, speculations on whether China is shifting away from the Deng Xiaoping's foreign policy of keeping a low profile, have become increasingly certain (Justyna Szczudlik, 2015, p.1). Moreover, unlike his predecessor Hu Jintao, the current president appears to be more confident in the international arena.

In that particular regard, the aforementioned article written by a Chinese author Yan Xuetong is a reaction to the change of leadership. In his article, Yan acknowledges the debates that authors such as Chen and Weng portrayed. However, he believes that the long-standing debate about the need to reform Chinese foreign policy of keeping a low profile (KLP) as defined by Deng Xiaoping seems to have been concluded on 24 October 2013 when Xi Jinping delivered a speech at a foreign affairs conference of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Xi Jinping formally presented the strategy of striving for achievement (SFA). However, Beijing did not at the same time provide any official clarification of its meaning, leading to even more speculations (Xuetong Yan, 2014). Regardless of that, it seems that Beijing has put SFA into practice with China proposing “new type of great power relations” with the United States (Masayuki Masuda, 2016) trying to persuade the U.S. towards “mutual respect” (Bonnie S. Glaser, 2014, p. 2).

Yan in his work (2014) does not actually analyze Chinese behavior under the tenant of SFA. Rather, he examines the effectiveness of the SFA in terms of international relations. He concludes that despite the negativity surrounding SFA, Sino-U.S. relations have not only been stabilized but, in addition, since 2013 also improved, in the same manner the relations with major European powers (Germany, for instance). On the other hand, relations with Japan have taken a turn for the worse (Yan Xuetong, 2014). Furthermore, Yan identifies several characteristics in which SFA differs from KLP, such as political orientation instead of the economical one, undertaking responsibility as opposed to no leadership at all (Richard Turcsányi, 2016, p. 25), and greater emphasis on “core interests.”

Furthermore, Xi Jinping sees his country as a major power. In fact, during Xi Jinping's presidency, Beijing's new generation of leaders have tended to describe Chinese diplomacy as that of a major power (Masayuki Masuda, 2016). Turn of this particular sort has happened for the first time, as Xi Jinping's predecessors referred to China as merely a developing country.

### **2.2.1 Bigger emphasis on Chinese national interests – “Core Interests”**

Meanwhile, there are two camps with conflicting views. On the one hand, those who believe that Chinese diplomacy has changed, the likes of Yan Xuetong, for instance. And, on the other hand, those who do not believe so, such as Alastair Iain Johnston. However, it is fair to say that they all agree in one thing. That is the statement that China has become more pro-active in terms of its national interests, i.e. its “Core Interests.”

In one of his articles, Michael Swaine focuses specifically on the concept of core interests. According to him, by the early 2000s Chinese officials and leaders slowly adopted the term “core interests.” However, the use of the term has risen dramatically ever since 2009. For the sake of the argument, People's Daily articles with reference to “core interests” in 2009 were almost three times more frequent than in previous years (Michael Swaine, 2011, p. 4). Most recently, the scope of the “core interests” has been widened in order to include both the East and the South China Seas, putting them on par with the issue of Taiwan and Tibet (James Tunngley, 2016).

However, Xi Jinping does not beat around the bush. At the Politburo study session on China's peaceful development, Xi Jinping reportedly stated the commitment of China to peaceful development by saying that China (in the original text personal pronoun ‘we’ is used) was to “stick to the road of peaceful development but never give up our legitimate rights and never sacrifice our national core interests” (Jamil Anderlini, 2013). It seems Xi Jinping gives safeguarding Chinese interests and sovereignty same or even greater importance as to peaceful development that, for most of the past decade, has been followed (Jamil Anderlini, 2013). This is even more apparent in parts of the speech where Xi Jinping says: “No countries should expect us to make a deal on our own core interests,” and “No countries should expect us to swallow the bitter fruit that undermines our sovereignty, security, and development interests” (Jian Zhanga, 2015, p. 5).

Another interesting part of the speech is the use of the term ‘interests’ together with the term ‘development.’ That, as Jian Zhanga noted, has led to the assumption that any danger that potentially could endanger Chinese economic development, such as maritime supply line, could be considered as core interest of China (Jian Zhanga, 2015, p. 6). Furthermore, Xi Jinping's firm stance on the matter is supported by other Chinese leaders as well. For instance, Lt. Gen Qi Jianguo, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) said: “China

would adhere to key principles in foreign policy – open development, win-win situations and cooperative relationships. China's hope for sustained peace and stability in this region and stress on dialogues and consultations for the sake of peace by no means denote unconditional compromise, our resolve and commitment to safeguarding core national interests always stands steadfast” (D. S. Rajan, 2013).

Hence, beneath the umbrella of “core interests” in its centric foreign policy, China as expected is becoming increasingly assertive (D. S. Rajan, 2015), such as in the instance when Beijing refused to take part in the hearings when Philippines asked for an advisory opinion from the tribunal in 2013 regarding the South China Sea dispute (James Tunngley, 2016). Most recently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China denied the tribunal’s jurisdiction and outcome regarding such matters by stating: “The Chinese government reiterates that, regarding territorial issues and maritime delimitation disputes, China does not accept any means of third party dispute settlement or any solution imposed on China” (FMPRC, 2016). Therefore, core interests can be understood as non-negotiable areas in Chinese diplomacy (Richard Turcsányi, 2016, p. 20).

### **2.2.2 Political orientation over the economic one**

For Yan Xuetong (2014), the distinguishing feature of SFA is its political orientation over economic interests. As he notes, the goal of KLP is to create a stable and peaceful environment for Chinese economic development: a win-win solution. Yan Xuetong (2014) cited an example of Chinese preference of preventing war on the Korean Peninsula over the denuclearizing of the region, which could jeopardize the stability of the region and hence Chinese rise as well. However, this does not mean peace and stability are not part of Chinese increasingly pro-active approach in terms of striving for achievement. The difference is that Xi Jinping uses Chinese foreign policy as a tool for the national rejuvenation, i.e., the “Chinese dream” concept (Yan Xuetong, 2014, p. 166). The new concept of “Chinese dream,” introduced by Xi Jinping at the National Museum’s “Road to Revival” exhibition (David Cohen, 2012) represents an embodiment of Xi Jinping’s aspiration for the national revival from hundred years of national humiliation. And as such, the term replaced the concept of “harmonious world” put forward by Hu Jintao. The concept is built on the “two-century goal” plan, i.e. the plan to achieve “well-off society” by 2021 on the 100th anniversary of CCP and a “rich and strong socialist country” by 2021 on the 100th anniversary of PRC (Camilla T. N. Sørensen, 2015, p. 56).

Camilla T. N. Sørensen (2015) writes that Xi Jinping in the international arena promotes the “Chinese dream” as a continuation of peaceful development by continuously expressing Chinese desire for a stable and peaceful world as the main preconditions for the realization of the “Chinese dream.” However, Yan Xuetong (2014) concludes that the shift in the main purpose of Chinese foreign policy from focusing on economic development to the national rejuvenation will bring its

consequences. He suggests that China will no more passively adapt to changes in the world. On the contrary, China will actively participate in the world politics and take necessary actions to shape its external environment in a favorable direction although it is harder to create a favorable external environment for the “Chinese dream” than to maintain stable and peaceful environment for economic development. Thus, compromise is a powerful tool to keep the peace and status quo, but it is not ideal to achieve the national rejuvenation.

### 2.2.3 Undertaking responsibility

Yan Xuetong (2014) pointed out to yet another deviation, and that is keeping a low-profile strategy being based on principles of undertaking no leadership, non-alliance, and prioritizing the relation with the United States. The tenants of striving for achievement are being close, credible, benefiting, and inclusive.

Yan mentions that besides improving relations with neighboring countries, the tenant “being closer” suggests that the U.S. will no longer be a default button to press in case of conflict between the United States and neighboring countries. That option disappeared after President Obama’s election: it was not a coincidence, according to Yan, for Obama to go to ASEAN countries on his first international trip. Yan claims that was the moment when Chinese officials realized that his rebalancing pivot into Asia was not just an empty talk to win the elections (Yan Xuetong, 2014).

Yan also explains why Xi picked “credibility” as one of his foreign policy principles by stating two reasons. First, credibility is a feature of a good leader and choosing it shows that Chinese foreign policy has indeed evolved to what Yan calls “strong-power diplomacy.” a speech given by Wang Yi, entitled “Exploring the Path of Major Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics,” supports this claim. a “major country” meaning has changed from the past, when it was referring to any country stronger than China, as opposed to present when it refers to China itself as major country. Second, “credibility” also suggest that China will undertake more responsibility regarding various international issues as opposed to KLP approach which rejected international responsibility because it assumed taking a leadership position (Yan Xuetong, 2014). As it has been already mentioned, this is an issue that goes against the principles of TGYH.

The tenant “benefiting” is, however, straightforward and it refers to economic help to developing countries. The principle of “inclusive” is something both KLP and SFA have in common, but Yan Xuetong still sees two differences between those two. On the one hand, SFA is more active, i.e., Xi’s regional initiative such as The Belt and Road plan. Second, KLP cooperation in the region is of economic nature only. SFA, for its part, focuses not only on economic cooperation but also on areas such as politics, culture, and security. In this sense, SFA is in essence a more of a scheming strategy in itself.

### 3 Methodology

To successfully answer the research question, six speeches from Hu Jintao and six speeches from Xi Jinping, have been chosen for this research. The selection of speeches was not random. Each speech was given at either one of the three chosen kinds of events: the G20, the United Nations, or the Boao Forum summit. In addition, the speeches have been selected equally, which means four speeches per each summit per each president, with having each president being represented by his two speeches in two different years. The intention behind this research has been to analyze the speeches in terms of qualitative as well as quantitative approach, with a goal to either confirm or refute the notion that Chinese foreign policy has deviated from its course of keeping a low profile.

To do so, information presented in the theoretical part of the thesis has been put to use in order to generate eight different codes representing different features of either the low-profile or a more pro-active foreign policy style. Regarding their distribution, half of the generated codes characterize features of the low-profile style, and vice-versa. However, as to avoid clustering, two mother-groups has been created, one mother-group consisting of all codes representing features or the low-profile strategy and the second mother-group comprising of all pro-active codes. Furthermore, it has been assumed that each paragraph can bear maximum number of one unique mother-group, meaning that one paragraph of a text in transcript can be associated with either low-profile, pro-active, or both without any duplicates. The picture below represents a segment of Xi Jinping's speech in 2013 at the G20 summit with already assigned codes in order to provide a visual idea of what speech coding is actually about.

In this regard, China adopts its economic policies not only for the good of its own economy, but for the good of the world economy as well. China's economic fundamentals are good. In the first half of this year its GDP grew by 7.6%. Nonetheless, China also faces such problems as high local government debt and excessive production capacity in some industries. These problems are controllable, and we are taking measures to address them.

We have realized that to solve the root problems in our long-term economic development we must firmly streamline our economic structure, even if we have to slow down the growth rate a bit. Any undertaking needs comprehensive and far-sighted thinking. A development model resembling killing a goose to get its golden eggs or draining the pond to catch the fish cannot be sustainable.

China's economy is highly integrated with the world economy. A China that enjoys more stable, higher-quality and more sustainable growth is conducive to the long-term economic growth of the world as a whole. China has the conditions and ability to achieve sustainable and healthy economic development, and produce more positive spillover effects for the world economy.

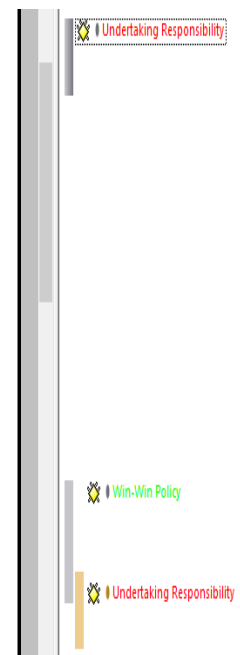


Fig. 1 Segment of a coded speech created in ATLAS.TI

The analytical section of the thesis is divided into two parts, quantitative and qualitative. In the quantitative analysis, examination of transcripts of the selected speeches has been done and the codes based on the created criteria distributed, which has allowed for results to be displayed in an Excel table allowing for interpretation of possible changes. In the qualitative research, on the other hand, the issue of major changes in the selected speeches of the two presidents has been tested and scrutinized in regards to the quantitative analysis already presented. The qualitative section has been written so as to challenge certain findings resulting from the quantitative part due to possible errors in these findings as caused by numerical nature of the results presented in the quantitative part. Meaning, even though quantitative results support a certain outcome, there might be certain factors which could potentially be opposed to the numerical findings, such as the degree of pro-activity, for instance.

### 3.1 Speeches

Communication has been the building stone, but also the downfall for that matter, for many political careers for a long time (Ferdinand Prondzynski, 2011). Indeed, we live in the time when leaders and politicians alike must be skilled in the art of communication as to rise to the top (Michael Bruton, 2014). Today, hardly anybody remembers any John F. Kennedy's accomplishments. However, almost everybody remembers or knows about his famous quote "Ich bin ein Berliner." In today's world, politics is not only about the right policies in the right time, but also about persuading others that your policies and actions are adequate. Leaders must create a vision in people's minds for them to share and follow (Ferdinand

Prondzynski, 2011). Historically speaking, Chinese leaders used the art of communication to tell the world about their peaceful intentions on many occasions, and this thesis is based on the three different venues that Chinese presidents use as the medium to share their intentions and goals, the G20, the United Nations, and the Boao Forum summits.

### 3.1.1 The G20

When the Group of 8 (the G8) was created, it consisted of the six wealthiest countries at that time. Moreover, although China is a wealthy country, it is still not a member of the G8. However, along with other rising economies (Brazil, India, Mexico, and South Africa), China is a member of the “outreach 5.” Albeit, Xin Zhou in his article (2016) mentions Hu Jintao’s disappointment in difference of treatment, the guest members are allegedly treated as outcasts (Xin Zhou, 2016). However, the Group of 20 (the G20) has changed the game. The outsiders have now become key players, namely China. In Zhu Jiejing words: “For Beijing, the G20 offers the chance, for the first time in history, to sit at the table as an equal partner with all major powers in the world in talking about the global economy” (Xin Zhou, 2016).

Authors such as Hugh Jorgensen and Daniela Strube are of the same opinion as Zhu Jiejing, and they have argued that the G20 provides China with opportunities to shape global economic governance due to three reasons. First, the fact that China is an original member of the G20 with an equal voice in “real” discussions as the great powers is of vital importance. Second, the G20 consists of other Asian developing countries and hence it does not undermine Chinese claims to be a developing country from the (global) South. In addition, other models (G7+China, for instance) have undermined Chinese soft power in the region. Last but not least, the G20 represents a place where China can build mutual trust with major economies, hence solve the problematic issue of moving away from the low-profile diplomacy to a more pro-active role without raising suspicion (Hugh Jorgensen, Daniela Strube 2014).

Regarding Hu Jintao’s speeches at the G20 summits, the speeches given in 2008 and 2011 have been selected. The former date marks the first time in history that Hu Jintao had an opportunity to speak with other major economies as an equal partner amidst the 2008 global financial crisis that many authors have identified as the year of Chinese increase in its assertive behavior. The former date has a three-year gap, i.e., enough time to see changes since 2008 and not the last year of Hu Jintao’s presidency when his activity could have been effected.

Moreover, in terms of Xi Jinping speeches, the period between 2013 and 2016 has been selected. Much like Hu Jintao, it was in 2013 that Xi Jinping’s first speech at the G20 was given. In 2016 China hosted the economic gathering itself and hence set the tone in economic governance, showing, as Harry Broadman said, that the



Hangzhou summit was an opportunity to show Beijing having become a global player (SCMP, 2016).

### 3.1.2 The United Nations

In the report from the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, the United Nations (UN) together with the G20 were the only multilateral organizations identified as mediums for China to play a more active role in when it comes to external affairs (Hugh Jorgensen, Daniela Strube 2014). Indeed, in recent years, China's activity in the UN has grown. Besides a collaborative forum where China can exert its power (permanent member), the UN represents an opportunity to demonstrate Chinese commitment to peace. Is this truly so?

Joel Wuthnow (2016) in his interview identifies several Chinese goals in the UN. First, as a permanent member of the security council, China uses this position to protect its national interests and stability in the region alike. Second, China uses the UN to keep cooperation with other key members. In this regard, China wants to be seen as a responsible stakeholder. Hence according to Wuthnow, China tries to find a solution in order to claim that it is part of the solution by demonstrating its responsibility (Iran, for instance). Third, China uses its position in the UN to keep certain countries at a "lower status," for example, Taiwan or Japan. Furthermore, China leverages its position as a veto-holding country to transform seemingly unfavorable resolutions to favorable ones.

Furthermore, on a question regarding growing Chinese involvement in the UN in terms of sanctions and peacekeeping in Chinese perspective on sovereignty, Wuthnow claims that it is important to distinguish between two elements, rhetoric and practice. Rhetorically, China is clearly defending the role of sovereignty. However, recently China has started voting for sanctions against countries, and, in addition, Beijing has moved from abstaining to supporting peacekeeping operations (CSIS, 2016).

Regarding the speech selection for this research, the speeches given in years 2005, 2009, 2015, and 2017 have been chosen based on a few reasons. First and foremost, the selection has been limited due to lack of transcripts in from a number of years. Second, the year 2005 is before the global crisis, hence the speech itself lacked in terms of its influence on Chinese diplomacy. Third, there is enough time between Hu Jintao's and Xi Jinping's speeches to see the difference. Fourth, the decision on speeches has been influenced by the Chinese peacekeeping contributions, i.e., since 2004 Chinese contribution (activity) started steadily increasing and reached 2015 when it registered a sudden increase (CSIS, 2016). The graph below displays peacekeeping contributions by country, with China marked in yellow, France in black, the U.S. in red, and the UK in orange.

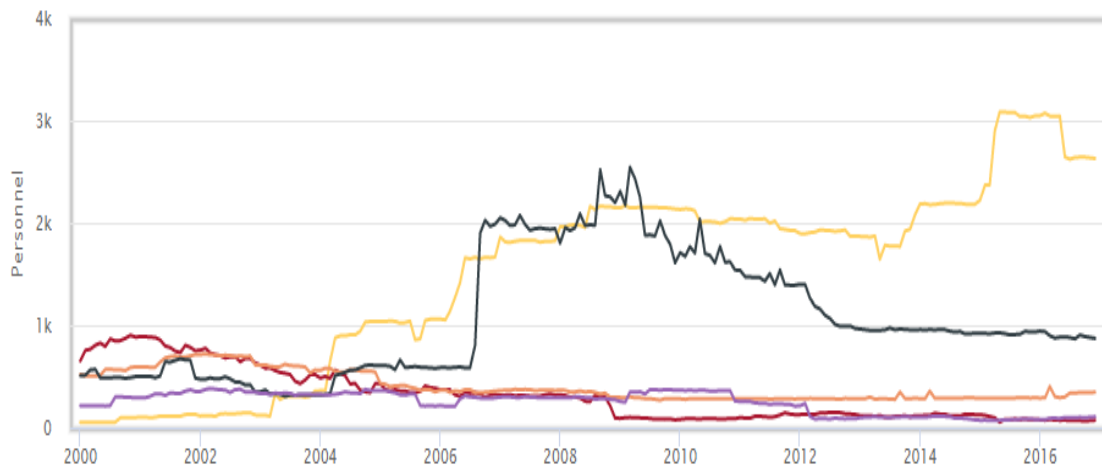


Fig. 2 Peacekeeping Contributions by Country obtained from CSIS

### 3.1.3 The Boao Forum

When Asian economy suffered a heavy decline from the financial crisis in late 1990s, it was decided to create a place where Asian countries would express their ideas in order to strengthen economic integration. The first Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) summit was in 2002 and since then the BFA is considered as a vital part of Chinese diplomacy. The forum's importance for Chinese development is clear. In 2003, Zheng Bijian officially introduced the peaceful rise strategy. And while BFA was originally created for purely economic reasons, the forum's range of topic has expanded to include topics such as Sino-US relations, food security, cyberspace, and the US role in Asia (Oliver Stuenkel, 2015).

As it has been already mentioned, Yan Xuetong named four tenants of SFA. One of them is the tenant of "being closer," and there is no better way in this direction than by focusing on regional diplomacy by highlighting cooperation between Asian countries and aiming to increase dialogue and expanded links. Furthermore, in the opinion of Oliver Stuenkel (2015), BFA started as a joint project but is now largely under the influence of Chinese government, thus providing China with a position where it can potentially shape discussions in its favor.

With regard to the selected speeches, the speeches given by Hu Jintao in 2004 and 2011 have been selected. The speech in 2004 given by Hu Jintao is the first speech by a Chinese president since the official introduction of the peaceful rise strategy in 2003. The speech in 2011, on the other hand, was given in the period when Chinese diplomacy was already considered more pro-active. In terms of Xi Jinping's speeches, moreover, the choice has been far less complicated since there are only two speeches given by Xi Jinping at the Boao Forum.

## 3.2 Codes

Put in a simple way, codes are objects that are used to label a segment of data collection. They can be a category, a theme, an attribute, a dimension, a property, or a characteristic. They are used for organizational purposes mostly (Susanne Friese, 2017). In this research, codes have been used to analyze speeches of Chinese presidents. In their speeches, one can find direct or indirect indicators on types of foreign policy style (either the low-profile or the pro-active one) they are advocates of. Each label (code) represents a specific feature of Chinese foreign policy style. Hence, by generating codes based on the selected features and subsequently applying them as labels on speech segments carrying the selected feature a synoptic order in an otherwise unprocessed collection of data is created. Moreover, based on their summary in accordance with the selected criteria, comparison of the selected speeches of both Chinese presidents has been possible and it aims to answer the question whether Xi Jinping has indeed moved away from Xiaoping's dictum of keeping the low profile.

First mother group, "low-profile," consists of four codes. The first is the peaceful development. Qin Yaqing in his article (2014) argues that Chinese foreign policy can be described as continuity through change. Qin concludes that the top priority of China remains its socio-economic development. China's development, therefore, requires stable external environment. Hence international grand strategy of China will work in this direction.

The "win-win policy" is second. In his article, Qin mentions realist assumptions regarding China's rise. It says that the rising power will inevitably challenge the current hegemon and change the world order. In other words, it is an assumption that China and the United States will be locked in a zero-sum game (Qin Yaqing, 2014). The win-win strategy is therefore the policy where both sides would emerge as winners although win-win cooperation is often used in terms of economic cooperation and as direct rejection of the realist claims.

"Common development" is the third. Here, China wishes to develop together with other countries, especially developing ones, on the basis of mutual benefits (win-win). This is saying that China's rise will not be at the cost of other nations' interests. In Hu Jintao's words: "China will continue to keep in mind both the interests of the Chinese people and the common interests of the people of all countries" (Jason Buhi, 2014, p.261).

Rejection of zero-sum game" is, last but not least, the fourth one. Yan Xuetong in his article (2014) discusses the official defense KLP strategy by drawing on an article by the then State Councilor Dai Bingguo. Dai believed KLP is a vital key to achieving further socio-economic development, which Qin Yaqing identified as top priority for China. Dai, in his article, named several key points of KLP, such as being moderate and cautious, undertaking no leadership position, raising no banner,

searching for no expansion, not running after hegemony, and finally following the path of the peaceful development. According to Yan Xuetong, the phrases “undertaking no leadership,” “raising no banner,” and “not running after hegemony” are direct rejections of the realist thinking. China, by not challenging the U.S., would therefore avoid the zero-sum scenario.

The second mother group, “pro-active,” consists of four codes as well. First, there is the issue of sovereignty. Michael Swaine in his article (2014) states that even though virtually every nation has its own national interests, increasing Chinese use of core interests and its scope widening are signs of a more pro-active Chinese leadership in general. Furthermore, even Qin Yaqing (2014) identified sovereignty as a component of change in the continuity of Chinese low-profile policy. For him sovereignty is the area where one is to expect tougher Chinese behavior, particularly regarding Japan, with Qin not excluding a possibility of limited military actions.

“Cooperative reformer” is next in the line. John Kirton in his book (2016) mentions opinions of several prominent scholars who see Chinese actions at international forums (such as the G20, for instance) as essentially attempts to play a role of an active cooperative reformer in response to the 2008 global financial crisis. In his work, he cites Wang Yong who sees China and other emerging economies alike cooperating towards the goal of reforming global economic governance (John Kirton, 2016, p. 3-4).

Third and fourth codes are “undertaking responsibility” and “taking a leadership position among developing countries.” As already mentioned, Yan Xuetong (2014) identified several tenants of the SFA strategy. One of them is “credibility.” Yan says it is a fundamental attribute of good leadership and a precondition for becoming an authority in terms of Chinese traditional political thoughts. Furthermore, according to him it also means that China is ready to shoulder greater international responsibility, i.e., the case of bigger Chinese involvement in the UN peacekeeping operations, for instance. KLP, on the other hand, did not even consider the concept credibility, because it was in direct opposition to its tenants of undertaking no leadership. Yan also identified “benefiting” as one of the SFA tenants. As already stated, the idea is to let other developing countries benefit from China’s development (Yan Xuetong, 2014). These two tenants together with Wang Yong’s vision of China cooperating with other developing countries to reform the global order suggest that the leadership position China tries to claim is among developing countries, particularly so in the neighborhood.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Quantitative results

The worksheets below illustrate results from a thorough examination of the chosen speeches given by both presidents at three international meetings, the G20, the United Nations, and the Boao Forum summits, and subsequent utilization of the methodology in question, speech coding. Hence, the table below presents the final number of highlighted codes under their respective mother groups and their sums according to the stated criteria.

	Low-Profile	Pro-Active	TOTALS:
Xi Jinping - G20 Speech - 2013	5	6	11
Xi Jinping - G20 Speech 2016	14	14	28
Xi Jinping - Boao Forum Speech - 2013	12	8	20
Xi Jinping - Boao Forum Speech - 2015	14	13	27
Xi Jinping - UN Speech 2015	13	8	21
Xi Jinping - UN Speech 2017	22	11	33
TOTALS:	80	60	140

	Low-Profile	Pro-Active	TOTALS:
Hu Jintao - G20 Speech - 2008	3	2	5
Hu Jintao - G20 Speech - 2011	8	6	14
Hu Jintao - BOAO Forum Speech - 2004	8	4	12
Hu Jintao - BOAO Forum Speech - 2011	6	5	11
Hu Jintao - UN Speech - 2005	15	7	22
Hu Jintao - UN Speech - 2009	10	8	18
TOTALS:	50	32	82

Fig. 3 Quantitative results created in Microsoft Excel

The very first thing one can notice is the Xi Jinping's vigor. As can be seen in the table, the total number of highlighted codes in Xi's speeches is much higher in contrast to Hu Jintao as well.<sup>3</sup> Although all Xi Jinping's speeches, part from the United Nations speech in 2015, register higher number of highlighted codes, Xi Jinping was particularly more active during his G20 speech in 2016. Thus, it may be claimed that Xi Jinping is, overall, a more active speaker. Furthermore, in terms of code distribution, one is to agree with the widespread discourse concerning Xi Jinping's pro-active approach, i.e. one can notice big increase in registered pro-active hits in Xi Jinping's speeches. However, a closer look reveals that, although there is an increase in pro-active codes in Xi Jinping's speeches, at the same time, in terms of total numbers, there is an increase in low-profile hits as well.

<sup>3</sup> Xi's speeches consist of 15 429 words in total whereas Hu's only 13 066 words.

Another issue worth mentioning is the positive correlation between time and Xi Jinping's activity regarding the highlighted codes at each international forum. Number of both low-profile and pro-active hits in Xi Jinping's speeches seems to rise consistently the longer Xi Jinping is in power. Xi Jinping particularly has increased his activity at the G20 summits, not only regarding total number of highlighted codes, but regarding both pro-active and low-profile hits as well. Moreover, although Hu Jintao registered an even greater increase, particularly in the pro-active section, his activity across the board does not follow the same pattern as Xi Jinping. For instance, Xi Jinping's overall activity at the Boao Forums has increased over time, whereas, Hu Jintao registered an overall decline. What caused the overall decrease though, is perhaps the most important part of it, i.e., the increase in pro-active codes and decline in the low-profile ones.

Overall, the results from speech coding seem to confirm the premise regarding Hu Jintao. The absolute number of low-profile codes (50) registered in speeches given by Hu Jintao is substantially higher than the number of pro-active codes (32) in Hu Jintao's speeches. On the other hand, despite expectations by some authors, the numerical results from the conducted coding do not support the premise regarding Xi Jinping. The number of pro-active codes relative to the number of low-profile codes in speeches given by Xi Jinping is lower in this regard.

However, if one considers percentage of changes in the numbers of codes relative to each president, one is to come to a different conclusion. In this respect, the absolute number of pro-active codes registered in Xi Jinping's speeches relative to Hu Jintao's number increased by 87,5 percent, whereas the percentage increase in the absolute number of low-profile codes is only 60. Even the proportion of pro-active codes relative to the overall number of registered hits supports the premises regarding Xi Jinping, i.e., Xi Jinping's pro-active codes have greater proportion (42,9%) in the overall activity than Hu Jintao's (39%).

Therefore, it may be concluded that regarding some occurrences of low-profile and pro-active codes, the low-profile diplomatic dictum as guiding principle still prevails in Xi Jinping's speeches. That, however, does not mean that Xi Jinping does not have bigger pro-active tendencies than Hu Jintao does, but rather that Xi Jinping has bigger proportion of the pro-active codes in relation to the overall activity when compared to Hu Jintao.

## 4.2 Qualitative observations

The quantitative results obtained from the speech coding, however, do not have to be the most appropriate or even optimal way to determine whether China's diplomacy under the new president, Xi Jinping, has indeed moved away from Deng Xiaoping's dictum of low-profile. The table above shows substantial increase in the pro-active and low-profile codes alike. And even though numerical results present clear picture to draw conclusions from, there are other factors in the play. For

instance, there can be a difference in a manner each president approaches difficult/pro-active issues such as sovereignty. Here one can look at what follows prior to the pro-active code and possibly what follows after so as to determine the difference in intensity of pro-activity between Xi Jinping and Hu Jintao. After all, there is a difference in the impression a president makes when stating that China would certainly protect its national interests and then continuing to reassure his audience about China's commitment to the peaceful development, and vice versa.

Another way to assess intensity in this case might be a difference in how far each president is willing to go in taking his pro-active statements on certain occasions. Again, listeners get a subtler feeling from those statements where speakers just touch on assertive topics/codes. However, in the case where speaker unfolds the topic more deeply, listener is bound to have a different feeling altogether. And last but not least, one can isolate different speech phrases based on which it is possible to determine the degree of pro-activity or low-profile approach employed. In fact, all those aspects can even be contradicting to the numerical results.

Hence in this part of the thesis, there are several observations isolated from the selected speeches as given by Xi Jinping and Hu Jintao. Those findings have a possibility to confirm or refute the popularized claim that Xi Jinping is a rather assertive leader, and possibly to explain the unusual numerical results obtained from the speech coding in terms of the increase in the low-profile codes in Xi Jinping's speeches.

#### **4.2.1 The "softening strategy"**

As previously mentioned, both Michael Swaine and Qin Yaqing have identified the issue of sovereignty as a sign of a more pro-active diplomacy of China. However, a more detailed look at the relevant speech segments point out to both similarity and, even more importantly, difference in a manner each president approaches this issue that allows for identification of differences in terms of assertiveness. It seems that both presidents tend to mention the need for mutual respect and treatment of each other as equals together with the issue of sovereignty.

However, there are differences in this respect as well. Unlike Hu Jintao, Xi Jinping in most instances deploys, as it in this thesis referred to as, the "softening strategy." As mentioned before, the speaker can arouse different impressions depending the manner he/she chooses to express message. In this case, this strategy intends to reassure the audience about China's peaceful intentions, so as to soften the audience prior to the "nuclear" topics such as sovereignty. Xi Jinping usually starts the relevant paragraph by stressing the need for partnership, dialog, peace, and stability before he touches on the sovereignty issue. For instance, in his 2017 speech at the UN summit, Xi said: "Countries should foster partnerships based on dialogue, non-confrontation, and non-alliance," and then went on to stress the need to respect each other's national interests: "Major powers should

respect each other's core interests and major concerns" (Xi Jinping, 2017). Hence, the assertive approach suddenly appears not that threatening, but rather almost feels like a necessity.

On the other hand, that is not always the case. In the light of Qin Yaqing's theory of continuity through change, one can notice that without any "softening" Xi Jinping sometimes immediately addresses core issues at hand. In his words, it is sovereign equality that "is the most important norm governing state-to-state relations over the past centuries and the cardinal principle observed by the United Nations and all other international organizations" (Xi Jinping, 2017).

Furthermore, at the Boao Forum summit in 2013 he stated: "On the basis of firmly upholding its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity, China will maintain good relations with its neighbors and overall peace and stability in our region. China will continue to play a constructive role in addressing regional and global hotspot issues, encourage dialogue and talks for peace, and work tirelessly to solve the relevant issues properly through dialogue and negotiations" (Xi Jinping, 2013). In this part of the speech, Xi Jinping uses the softening technique in reverse and by doing so, he seems to put bigger emphasis on the matter of sovereignty than the peaceful development. It almost seems as if Xi Jinping builds China's peaceful diplomacy solely on the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Overall, it is not possible to omit the fact that Hu Jintao touches the topic substantially less than Xi Jinping does. There is an interesting point here to be made. In most cases, and definitely not all as previously mentioned, Xi Jinping tries to soften the audience up before referring to the issue of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and Chinese core interests.

Furthermore, this is a vital piece of information considering the fact that, in accordance to what has already been argued in the thesis, one can notice an increase in both pro-active and low-profile codes in Xi Jinping speeches relative to Hu Jintao ones. Additionally, the softening strategy might be the very reason behind such phenomenon. Due to various reasons/conditions on the political scene, Xi Jinping cannot afford to present China as an aggressor, and hence his use of the softening strategy and subsequent increase in the number of low-profile codes.

Furthermore, as also showed above, not in all such instances does Xi Jinping opt to use this particular strategy, and hence there is a bigger increase in pro-active codes than low-profile ones relative to Hu Jintao. Indeed, it seems that Xi Jinping wariness could very well be the cause behind misleading results at the first glance.

#### **4.2.2 Reform and leadership tendencies**

As previously mentioned, Yan Xuetong (2014) claims that the SFA strategy aims in direction of China undertaking a leadership position among developing countries.



Both presidents, Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping, express such tendencies through fighting for Chinese interests and appropriate Chinese role in this regard. However, there are two differences.

First, there is a difference in a degree to which each president wants to elevate developing countries' role. In the case of Hu Jintao, he pushes forward in respect to reforms of international institutions, UN Security Council, for instance, where medium and small countries would have a bigger say in the decision-making and reforming processes. He himself said at the UN speech in 2009 that great "effort should be made to increase the representation and voice of developing countries in reforming the international financial system." (Hu Jintao, 2009).

On the other hand, Xi Jinping is more moderate. Xi usually goes only as far as fighting for the countries' equal treatment by saying: "All countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, must treat each other as equals" (Xi Jinping, 2016).

Second, each time Xi Jinping stresses it, he again deploys the softening strategy by mentioning the need to seek consensus and the win-win strategy. Worthy of mentioning in this particular regard is a single instance during his 2015 UN speech where Xi is of the same nature as Hu Jintao:

"China will continue to uphold the international order. We will stay committed to the path of development through cooperation. China was the first country to put its signature on the UN Charter. We will continue to uphold the international order and system underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. China will continue to stand together with other developing countries. We firmly support greater representation and say of developing countries, especially African countries, in the international governance system. China's vote in the United Nations will always belong to the developing countries" (Xi Jinping, 2015).

In this segment of his speech, one can see his courageous decision to support greater representation and role of developing countries. All things being equal, one is to also notice that Xi Jinping indeed starts by saying that China intends to uphold the existing order, thus making his statement about supporting the representation and role of developing countries less impactful and even contradictory. Again, one cannot omit the presence of the "softening" strategy, whereby Xi declares China's intent to cooperate rather than fight to achieve development (the win-win strategy).

Even the mere number of "reform" words is twice as high in Hu Jintao's speeches when compared to Xi Jinping's. Thus, one is to deduct that Hu Jintao is a bigger reformer. Albeit, such difference can be due to both political and financial climates. On the one hand, during the presidency of Hu Jintao, the 2008 financial crisis happened and there was considerable need for economic reform. On the other hand, Xi Jinping could not afford to suggest reform of the Security Council when

China-Japan relations have actually taken to worse in recent years, which essentially supports Joel Wuthnow's theory that Xi Jinping in essence uses the UN to keep certain states, such as Japan, at a lower position.

Furthermore, this does not mean that Xi Jinping's reform tendencies are actually weaker than Hu Jintao's. Meanwhile, Hu Jintao's usual approach to reforms is of a suggestive nature in terms of his saying "we should." In some instances, Xi Jinping has a more straightforward approach by saying that China "will push for the reform of the global economic and financial systems" (Xi Jinping, 2015). This is to suggest that he is more determined to proceed with reforms than Hu Jintao. For instance, in his speech in 2016 Xi Jinping tried to reform the role of the G20 from crisis response mechanism focusing on short-term solutions to, as Xi Jinping called it, long-term governance. Furthermore, Xi also called for solidifying the role of the G20 as the center of international economic governance. Xi Jinping's efforts to promote the G20 are largely consistent with Hugh Jorgensen's and Daniela Strube's conclusion that the G20 indeed provides China with opportunities to shape the global economic governance (Hugh Jorgensen, Daniela Strube 2014).

#### **4.2.3 Additional observations**

There are three other findings that are interesting and helpful in regards to supporting or refuting the quantitative results. First, Yan Xuetong (2014) claims that the distinguishing feature of the SFA is its political orientation over economic interests. In effort to challenge this premise in this research presented here in terms of Xi Jinping adopting a more pro-active diplomacy (SFA), a try towards refuting Yan's claim has been made. To do so effectively, corpus analysis toolkit called AntConc developed by Laurence Anthony has been put to use. This software has provided results towards seeking the number of instances with both Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping mentioning terms "financial" and "economic.\*" Asterisk in the latter term means that the software has been set so as to flag the term "economic" and any other term starting with "economic," such as economical, for instance. The results correspond to Yan Xuetong's work. The number of hits registered in Hu Jintao's speeches (211) is two-fold when compared to Xi Jinping's (99 hits), as shown below.

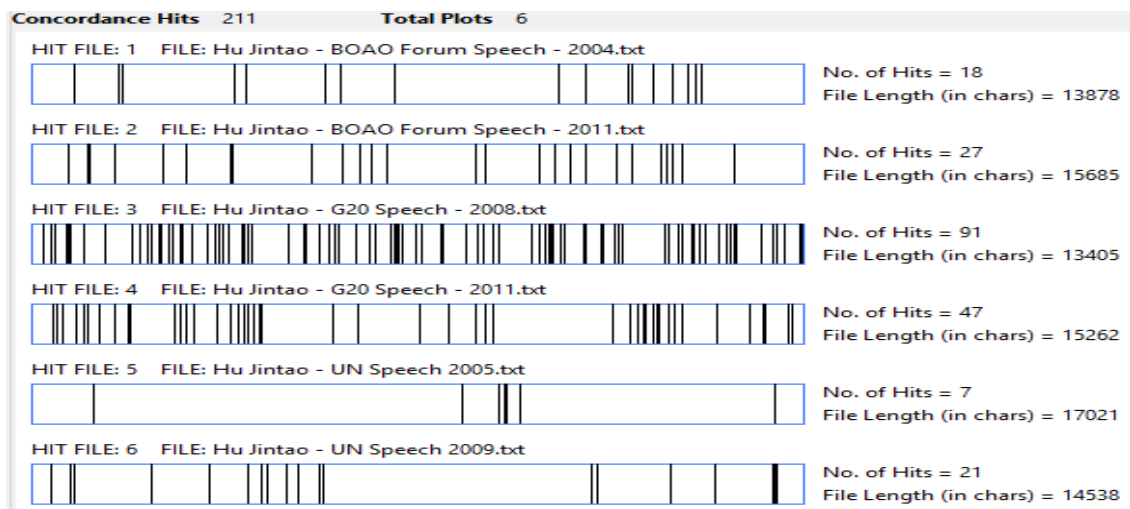


Fig. 4 Number of mentioning terms “financial” and “economic\*” by Hu Jintao as generated by AntConc

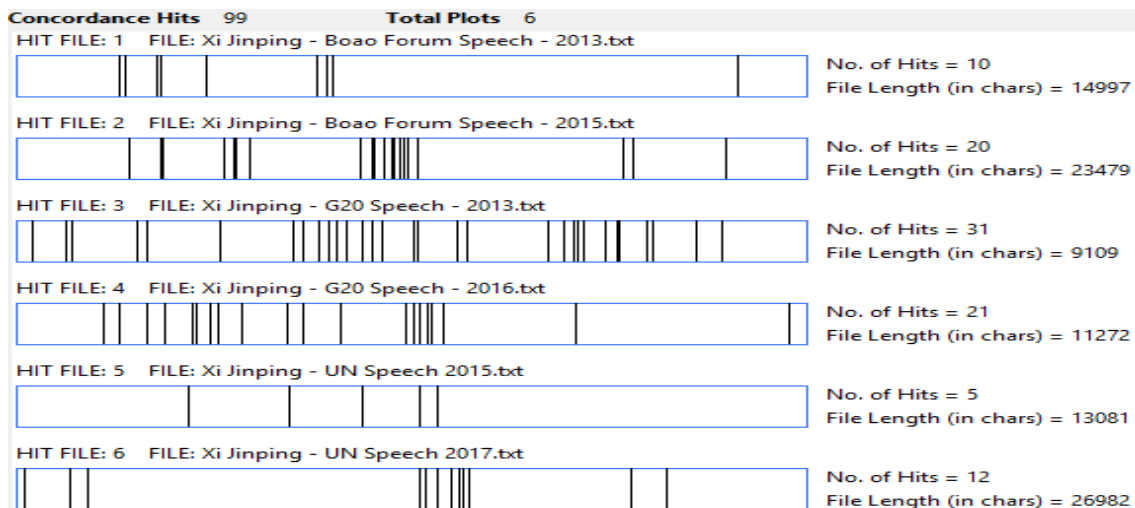


Fig. 5 Number of mentioning terms “financial” and “economic\*” by Xi Jinping as generated by AntConc

And, even though these results are an indicator to a certain degree, they are just plain numbers and no to indicate the context they were used in. Therefore, in order to tackle this issue, another search term, “development,” has been added so as to find correlation between this particular term and the term “economic\*” (i.e., close proximity of these two terms with having five words radius span). The number of found search terms with given conditions still supports Yan Xuetong’s premise, with the number of hits in Xi’s speeches being 4 as opposite to Hu Jintao’s (36), as shown below.

Concordance Hits 36		Total Plots 6
HIT FILE: 1	FILE: Hu Jintao - BOAO Forum Speech - 2004.txt	No. of Hits = 7 File Length (in chars) = 13878
HIT FILE: 2	FILE: Hu Jintao - BOAO Forum Speech - 2011.txt	No. of Hits = 10 File Length (in chars) = 15685
HIT FILE: 3	FILE: Hu Jintao - G20 Speech - 2008.txt	No. of Hits = 8 File Length (in chars) = 13405
HIT FILE: 4	FILE: Hu Jintao - G20 Speech - 2011.txt	No. of Hits = 7 File Length (in chars) = 15262
HIT FILE: 5	FILE: Hu Jintao - UN Speech 2005.txt	No. of Hits = 1 File Length (in chars) = 17021
HIT FILE: 6	FILE: Hu Jintao - UN Speech 2009.txt	No. of Hits = 3 File Length (in chars) = 14538

Fig. 6 Quantitative correlation between terms “development” and “economic\*” in Hu Jintao’s speeches as generated by AntConc

Concordance Hits 4		Total Plots 3
HIT FILE: 1	FILE: Xi Jinping - Boao Forum Speech - 2013.txt	No. of Hits = 1 File Length (in chars) = 14997
HIT FILE: 2	FILE: Xi Jinping - Boao Forum Speech - 2015.txt	No. of Hits = 2 File Length (in chars) = 23479
HIT FILE: 4	FILE: Xi Jinping - G20 Speech - 2016.txt	No. of Hits = 1 File Length (in chars) = 11272

Fig. 7 Quantitative correlation between terms “development” and “economic\*” in Xi Jinping’s speeches as generated by AntConc

Based on both sets of results, it is clear that Yan Xuetong’s premise has proven to be correct in terms of Hu Jintao being more focused on economic aspects than Xi Jinping.

Additionally, in the midst of trying to challenge the premise about Xi Jinping, several speech fragments have been noticed in Xi Jinping’s speeches which could be interpreted as Xi’s fading adherence to the peaceful development, i.e., the low-profile dictum. These are to serve as proof supporting the premise that Xi Jinping has indeed moved away from the long-standing low-profile (KLP) dictum as already argued. Originally the peaceful development was developed as means to an end based on the win-win framework where China’s development depends on

the peaceful and stable environment, thus reassuring the international community about Chinese peaceful intentions (Matt Ferchen, 2016).

However, there are Xi Jinping's statements, such as the following one which may prove problematic in this regard: "Countries, whether big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, should all contribute their share to maintaining and enhancing peace" (Xi Jinping, 2013). This particular speech segment at the Boao Forum summit 2013 was a mild version of the similar statement Xi Jinping made at the Politburo's study session when he said: "Not only should China adhere to the peaceful development road, but other countries must also commit themselves to the peaceful development road" (Jian Zhanga, 2015, p. 6).

Therefore one can indeed find that Xi Jinping divides peaceful development into two components. One is seeking peace, and the other is taking necessary action. In his words at the UN speech in 2015, Xi Jinping stressed the need to "adopt the dual approach of seeking peaceful solution to disputes and taking mandatory actions, so as to turn hostility into amity." (Xi Jinping, 2015).

Hence, it seems that Xi Jinping seeks reassurance from the international community. He has not only tried redefining the purpose of the peaceful development to his liking, but has additionally called for other countries to follow the same development and policy model as China has done so far. Therefore, the peaceful development codes (low-profile codes) in Xi Jinping's speeches can have dual nature, with their low-profile not necessarily having to be equal to the results in Hu Jintao's case.

Third, as already mentioned, Yan Xuetong identifies "credibility" as one of the SFA strategy tenants. For him, "credibility" also suggests that China is to undertake more responsibility regarding various international issues as opposed to the KLP approach (Yan Xuetong, 2014). This research has taken into account several transcript segments supporting this very theory in terms of Xi Jinping having moved away from the low-profile strategy.

Hu Jintao's speeches offer a few references of him trying to avoid responsibility and at the same time asking other countries, chiefly developed countries, to shoulder it. For instance, in his speech at the 2008 G20 speech, he said: "The international community, developed countries in particular, should assume due responsibilities and obligations and take concrete steps to help developing countries." (Hu Jintao, 2008).

Last but not least, Xi Jinping's statements are the opposite. For instance, in his speech at the UN summit in 2015, Xi said: "China will shoulder its share of responsibility." Furthermore, Xi does not let developed countries alone in the endeavor to help developing countries. For example, in his speech given at the UN in 2017, Xi said that China would "share our development opportunities with other

---

countries and welcome them aboard the fast train of China's development," which Yan Xuetong identified as one of the SFA strategy tenants in terms of being "benefiting." Therefore, not only that Yan Xuetong's premise regarding Xi Jinping's tendencies to shoulder bigger responsibility, which essentially defines the pro-active political style (SFA) seems to be correct, but also another feature identified by Yan in defining Xi's shift has also proved correct in this respect (i.e., the tenant of the SFA strategy as being "benefiting").

## 5 Conclusion

The primary goal of the thesis has been to answer via speech comparison and analysis the question whether the new Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, has indeed moved away from Beijing's traditional low profile diplomatic strategy of past decade followed by his predecessor Hu Jintao. As Alastair Iain Johnston notes, a very popular premise that he describes as a "new assertive meme," is that Xi Jinping has indeed moved away from Deng Xiaoping's teaching of keeping a low profile followed by many of his predecessors and towards a more pro-active, and even assertive, strategy.

In the beginning of the theoretical part, the main elements of Deng Xiaoping's teaching of keeping a low profile, known as the Tao Guang Yang Hui, have been presented. These elements were used to build Hu Jintao's own grand strategy of the Peaceful development. Numerous research has so far been published on the topic of the peaceful development, and perhaps the best-fitting definition in this respect is provided by Bonnie S. Glaser stating that the peaceful development strategy is a product of a continuous evolution of Chinese foreign policy starting with Deng Xiaoping.

In addition, the literature review has indicated that there are many authors having different views on the alleged Xi Jinping's foreign policy change. On the one hand, there are those who oppose such a premise, such as, for instance, Alastair Iain Johnston. On the other hand, there are those who agree with such a premise, such as Yan Xuetong. It seems that, however, there is no straightforward answer here, and thus there are authors who believe in the continuity with a change, such as Qin Yaqing.

The practical part of the thesis consists of speech analysis in terms of speech coding. Speeches in question have been selected as to cover three international summits both Chinese presidents attended and gave speech at: United Nations, Boao Forum, and G20. Furthermore, they have been selected in equivalent numbers, with codes used, featuring either low-profile or pro-active strategies (SFA), being drawn on the basis provided in the theoretical section of the thesis.

The results obtained from speech coding in terms of Hu Jintao's speeches are according to expectations as it has been confirmed that Hu Jintao was indeed a president who followed the low-profile strategy. This is apparent in an absolute number of low-profile codes (50) registered in speeches given by Hu Jintao is substantially higher than the number of pro-active codes (32)

On the other hand, the findings regarding Xi Jinping's speeches are rather surprising as the absolute numerical results of the conducted coding do not support the premise that he would switch overwhelmingly to assertive foreign

policy. This means that the absolute number of low-profile codes (80) registered in the speeches given by Xi Jinping is higher than the number of pro-active codes (60).

In that respect, the qualitative research has aimed to challenge the findings obtained from speech coding to either confirm or refute the numerical results. Five main findings have been arrived at in the course of the research: first, it has been confirmed that in most cases, though not in all of them, Xi Jinping deployed the “softening strategy.” He tried to assuage the audience before discussing the issue of sovereignty, territorial integrity, core interests, and other respective topics in his speeches.

Second, in terms of pro-active codes in the issues of “undertaking a leadership position among developing countries” and “cooperative reformer,” it appears that Hu Jintao had bigger leadership tendencies. This is a surprising observation as it is inconsistent with Deng Xiaoping’s guiding principle to never become a leader. While Hu Jintao strived to make developing countries part of the decision-making and reforming processes, Xi has gone only as far as defending and asking for their equal treatment. However, Xi Jinping has exhibited efforts to promote the role of G20 in the world, which is largely consistent with Hugh Jorgensen and Daniela Strube’s conclusion in this respect (Hugh Jorgensen, Daniela Strube 2014).

Third, by utilization of a corpus analysis toolkit called AntConc developed by Laurence Anthony, Yan Xuetong’s premise that Xi Jinping is less economically oriented than Hu Jintao has been confirmed (strategy of striving for achievement as identified by Yan Xuetong).

Fourth, elements in Xi Jinping speeches suggesting his commitment to peaceful development being conditional have also been discovered, since it was shown that Xi seeks reassurance that China will not be the only country committed to peaceful development.

Last but not least, Yan Xuetong’s premise regarding Xi Jinping’s tendencies to shoulder bigger responsibility, which can essentially be defined in terms of representing his pro-active political style (SFA), has also proved to be correct.

Overall, the quantitative results obtained from speech coding point out towards the fact that low-profile diplomatic dictum as the guiding principle prevails in Xi Jinping’s speeches. Thus, taking this point into consideration, the premise about Xi Jinping has essentially been refuted. However, the qualitative research has also confirmed the existence of SFA tenants in Xi Jinping’s speeches as Yan Xuetong highlighted, suggesting a shift from the low-profile strategy to a more pro-active one. Furthermore, the qualitative research has helped in identifying a possible explanation behind the conflicting quantitative results, chiefly in regards to the use of the “softening strategy” by Xi Jinping.



Consequently, the qualitative results are to some extent inconsistent with the quantitative results. Hence, the theory that has been put forward by Qin Yaqing seems to be the most accurate one, chiefly in relation to the issue of continuity (quantitative results) with a change (qualitative results).

## 6 References

- Anderlini, J. (2013, January 29). *Xi strikes strident tone on foreign policy*. Financial Times. Retrieved January 3, 2017, from <https://www.ft.com/content/13f6b08a-6a21-11e2-a7d2-00144feab49a>.
- Bader, J. (2016). *How Xi Jinping Sees the World...and Why* (1st ed.). Brookings. Retrieved from [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/xi\\_jinping\\_worldview\\_bader-1.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/xi_jinping_worldview_bader-1.pdf).
- Blaauw, E. (2013). *The driving forces behind China's foreign policy - has China become more assertive?* (1st ed.). RaboResearch Global Economics. Retrieved from <https://economics.rabobank.com/publications/2013/october/the-driving-forces-behind-chinas-foreign-policy-has-china-become-more-assertive/>.
- Bruton, M. (2014). *The power of a speech: the growing importance of communication from leaders*. London School of Economics and Political Science. Retrieved from <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2014/11/06/the-power-of-a-speech-the-growing-importance-of-communication-from-leaders/>.
- Buhi, J. (2014). *Foreign Policy and the Chinese Constitutions During the Hu Jintao Administration*. Boston College International And Comparative Law Review, 37(2). Retrieved from <http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/iclr/vol37/iss2/2/>.
- Chen, D., & Wang, J. (2011). *Lying Low No More? China's New Thinking on the Tao Guang Yang Hui Strategy*. China: An International Journal, 09(02), 195-216. doi:10.1142/s0219747211000136.
- Cheng, J. & Zhang, F. (1999). *Chinese Foreign Relation Strategies Under Mao and Deng: a Systematic and Comparative Analysis*. Politics And Governance, 14(3). Retrieved from <http://file:///D:/User/Downloads/1415-1659-1-PB.pdf>.
- Chinapower Project. (2016). *Is China contributing to the United Nations' mission?* chinapower.csis. Retrieved 21 February 2017, from <http://chinapower.csis.org/china-un-mission/>.
- Chubb, A. (2012, August 30). *"More 'doing' required": Ding Gang brings the taoguang-yanghui debate to the South China Sea* [Web log post]. Retrieved November 7, 2016, from <https://southseaconversations.wordpress.com/2012/08/30/more-doing-required-ding-gang-brings-the-taoguang-yanghui-debate-to-the-south-china-sea/>.
- Cohen, D. (2012, December 7). *Xi Jinping's Chinese Dream*. The Diplomat. Retrieved February 7, 2017, from <http://thediplomat.com/2012/12/xi-jinpings-chinese-dream/>.

- Danner, L. (2015). *The Debate on China's Grand Strategy*. China Policy Institute: Analysis. Retrieved 3 April 2017, from <https://cpianalysis.org/2015/05/04/the-debate-on-the-direction-of-chinas-grand-strategy/>.
- Deng, X. (1989). *With Stable Policies of Reform and Opening To the Outside World, China Can Have Great Hopes For the Future*. Speech. Retrieved November 7, 2016, from <https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/with-stable-policies-of-reform-and-opening-to-the-outside-world-china-can-have-great-hopes-for-the-future/>.
- Dobson, H. (2016). *China's G20 Leadership*. John Kirton London and New York: Routledge, 2016 xiv 191 pp. £95.00 ISBN 978-0-472-47948-8. *The China Quarterly*, 228, 1108-1109. doi:10.1017/S0305741016001181.
- Ferchen, M. (2016, March 8). *China Keeps the Peace: How Peaceful Development Helps and Hinders China*. Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved January 6, 2017, from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2016-03-08/china-keeps-peace>.
- Friese, S. (2017). *How to Make the Best of Codes in ATLAS.ti*. The atlas.ti research blog. Retrieved from <http://atlasti.com/2017/03/16/make-best-codes-atlas-ti/>.
- Glaser, B. S. (2014). "Chinese Foreign Policy under Xi Jinping: Continuity and Change". Lecture presented at Critical Issues Confronting China Seminar Series, Cambridge. Retrieved November 26, 2016, from [http://asiacenter.harvard.edu/files/asia-center/files/glaser\\_-\\_12-3-2014.pdf?m=1435075886](http://asiacenter.harvard.edu/files/asia-center/files/glaser_-_12-3-2014.pdf?m=1435075886).
- Glaser, B. S., & Medeiros, E. S. (2007). *The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of "Peaceful Rise."* *The China Quarterly*, 190, 291-310. doi:10.1017/S0305741007001208.
- Hu J. (2004, April 24). *China's Development Is an Opportunity for Asia*. Speech presented at Boao Forum for Asia, Boao. Retrieved April 1, 2017, from <http://english.boaoforum.org/document2004/11119.jhtml>.
- Hu J. (2005, September 15). *Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity*. Speech presented at United Nations Summit, New York. Retrieved April 4, 2017, from <http://www.un.org/webcast/summit2005/statements15/china050915eng.pdf>.
- Hu J. (2008, November 15). *Tide Over Difficulties Through Concerted Efforts*. Lecture presented at G20 Summit, Washington. Retrieved March 6, 2017, from [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/zyjh\\_665391/t524323.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t524323.shtml).

- Hu J. (2009, September 23). *United as One and Work for a Bright Future*. Speech presented at United Nations Summit, New York. Retrieved April 6, 2017, from [http://www.un.org/ga/64/generaldebate/pdf/CN\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/ga/64/generaldebate/pdf/CN_en.pdf).
- Hu J. (2011, April 15). *Towards Common Development and a Harmonious Asia*. Speech presented at Boao Forum for Asia, Boao. Retrieved April 8, 2017, from <http://shanghaiist.com/2011/04/17/hu-jintao-speech-boao-forum.php>.
- Hu J. (2011, November 3). *Promote Growth Through Win-Win Cooperation*. Speech presented at G20 Summit, Cannes. Retrieved April 4, 2017, from [http://english1.english.gov.cn/2011-11/04/content\\_1985834.htm](http://english1.english.gov.cn/2011-11/04/content_1985834.htm).
- Johnston, A. (2013). *How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?* *International Security*, 37(4). [http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/isec\\_a\\_00115](http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00115).
- Lampton, D. (2013). *Following the Leader: Ruling China, From Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping* (1st ed.). University of California Press.
- Masuda, M. (2016). *Why has Chinese foreign policy become more assertive?* *East Asia Forum*. Retrieved 5 April 2017, from <http://www.easiaforum.org/2016/02/20/why-has-chinese-foreign-policy-become-more-assertive/>.
- Onyegam, S. A. (2008). *Historical comparative case study of emerging hegemonic behavior: perspectives on the Peoples Republic of China* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Retrieved February 04, 2017, from [https://books.google.cz/books?id=m3F4kZhbVfgC&pg=PA34&lpg=PA34&dq=Samuel Onyegam works peaceful rise&source=bl&ots=5ZFSAko9Wk&sig=y40avFE5fr-gPzTErKbvUd439yE&hl=cs&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj5ouiFy\\_bRAhWJXBQKHQubDE4Q6AEIMzAD#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.cz/books?id=m3F4kZhbVfgC&pg=PA34&lpg=PA34&dq=Samuel+Onyegam+works+peaceful+rise&source=bl&ots=5ZFSAko9Wk&sig=y40avFE5fr-gPzTErKbvUd439yE&hl=cs&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj5ouiFy_bRAhWJXBQKHQubDE4Q6AEIMzAD#v=onepage&q&f=false).
- Prondzynski, F. (2011). *The importance of good (political) communication*. *University Diary*. Retrieved from <https://universitydiary.wordpress.com/2011/01/25/the-importance-of-good-political-communication/>.
- Rajan, D. S. (2013, August 7). *China: Xi Jinping's Foreign Policy – Expect No End to Assertiveness* (Working paper No. 5539). Retrieved January 6, 2017, from South Asia Analysis Group website: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/1330>.
- Rajan, D. S. (2015, April 10). *China under Xi Jinping- a New Trend in Foreign Policy?* (Working paper No. 5912). Retrieved January 6, 2017, from South Asia Analysis Group website: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/1754>.

Sørensen, C. (2015). *The Significance of Xi Jinping's "Chinese Dream" for Chinese Foreign Policy: From "Tao Guang Yang Hui" to "Fen Fa You Wei"*. *Journal of China and International Relations*, 3(1). doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.5278/ojs.jcir.v3i1.1146>.

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China on the Award of 12 July 2016 of the Arbitral Tribunal in the South China Sea Arbitration Established at the Request of the Republic of the Philippines. (2016, July 12). Retrieved January 7, 2017, from The South China Sea Issue website: [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/nanhai/eng/snhwtlcwj\\_1/t1379492.htm](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/nanhai/eng/snhwtlcwj_1/t1379492.htm).

Strube, D., & Jorgensen, H. (2014). *China, the G20 and global economic governance* (1st ed.). Lowy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.loyyinstitute.org/publications/china-g20-and-global-economic-governance>.

Stuenkel, O. (2015). *Why the Boao Forum matters*. *Post Western World*. Retrieved 11 January 2017, from <http://www.postwesternworld.com/2015/03/08/boao-forum-matters/>.

Swaine, M. (2010). *Perceptions of an Assertive China*. *China Leadership Monitor*, (32). Retrieved from <http://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/CLM32MS.pdf>.

Swaine, M. (2011). *China's Assertive Behavior—Part One: On "Core Interests"*. *China Leadership Monitor*, (34). Retrieved from <http://www.hoover.org/research/chinas-assertive-behavior-part-one-core-interests>.

Swaine, M. (2013). *The 18th Party Congress and Foreign Policy: The Dog that Did Not Bark?* *China Leadership Monitor*, (40). Retrieved from <http://www.hoover.org/research/18th-party-congress-and-foreign-policy-dog-did-not-bark>.

Swaine, M. D. (2015). *Xi Jinping On Chinese Foreign Relations: The Governance Of China And Chinese Commentary*. Hoover Institution, (48). Retrieved November 14, 2016, from <http://www.hoover.org/research/xi-jinping-chinese-foreign-relations-governance-china-and-chinese-commentary>.

Szczudlik, J. (2015). *Towards China's Great Power Diplomacy under Xi Jinping*. *PISM Policy Papers*, 9(111). Retrieved from <https://www.pism.pl/Publications/PISM-Policy-Paper-no-111>.

Tunningley, J. (2016). *The South China Sea Dispute: China's Polygonal Defence of Core Interests*. RUSI. Retrieved from <https://rusi.org/commentary/south-china-sea-dispute-chinas-polygonal-defence-core-interests>.

Turcsányi, R. (2016). *Chinese Assertive Foreign Policy: The 'Power-Shift' Theory and the South China Sea* (Doctoral dissertation, Masaryk University, 2016). Brno. Retrieved January 8, 2017, from <http://theses.cz/id/ccpnbv/>.

Wang, Z. (2017). *Keynote - Chinese Traditional Culture and Foreign Policy* (1st ed.). Retrieved from [https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/chinese\\_traditional\\_culture\\_and\\_foreign\\_policy.pdf](https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/chinese_traditional_culture_and_foreign_policy.pdf).

Weissmann1, M. (2015). *Chinese Foreign Policy in a Global Perspective: a Responsible Reformer "Striving For Achievement"*. Retrieved 14 February 2017, from: <https://journals.aau.dk/index.php/jcir/article/view/1150>.

Xi J. (2013, April 7). *Working Together Toward a Better Future for Asia and the World*. Speech presented at Boao Forum for Asia, Boao. Retrieved April 4, 2017, from [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/zyjh\\_665391/t1030610.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1030610.shtml).

Xi J. (2013, September 5). *Jointly Maintain and Develop an Open World Economy*. Speech presented at G20 Summit. In Xi Jinping *The Governance of China* (1st ed.). (2014). Beijing, China: Foreign Language Press.

Xi J. (2015, March 28). *Towards a Community of Common Destiny and a New Future for Asia*. Speech presented at Boao Forum for Asia in Boao. Retrieved April 5, 2017, from [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-03/29/c\\_134106145.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-03/29/c_134106145.htm).

Xi J. (2015, September 28). *Working Together to Forge a New Partnership of Win-win Cooperation and Create a Community of Shared Future for Mankind*. Speech presented at United Nations General Assembly, New York. Retrieved March 5, 2017, from <https://qz.com/512886/read-the-full-text-of-xi-jinpings-first-un-address/>.

Xi J. (2016, September 4). *Towards an Innovative, Invigorated, Interconnected and Inclusive World Economy*. Speech presented at G20 Summit, Hangzhou. Retrieved March 7, 2017, from <http://en.people.cn/n3/2016/0904/c90000-9110474.html>.

Xi J. (2017, January 18). *Work Together to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind*. Speech presented at United Nations General Assembly, Geneva. Retrieved April 5, 2017, from [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-01/19/c\\_135994707.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-01/19/c_135994707.htm).

Xin, Z. (2016). *China's long journey to centre stage at G20 summit*. South China Morning Post. Retrieved 4 April 2017, from <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2004987/chinas-long-journey-centre-stage-g20-summit>.

---

Yan, X. (2014). *From Keeping a Low Profile to Striving for Achievement*. The Chinese Journal of International Politics, 7(2), 153-184. doi:10.1093/cjip/pou027.

Zhang, J. (2015). *China's new foreign policy under Xi Jinping: towards 'Peaceful Rise 2.0'?* Global Change, Peace & Security, 27(1), 5-19. doi:10.1080/14781158.2015.99395.

Zheng B. (2005). *China's "Peaceful Rise" to Great-Power Status*. Foreign Affairs. Retrieved from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2005-09-01/chinas-peaceful-rise-great-power-status>.