

## APSA 2020 Annual Meeting Paper Proposal

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### **China-US strategic rivalry in economic affairs: Chinese MNCs in IPE**

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For many years, the Chinese government has pursued an explicit strategy of nurturing Chinese companies that can compete with the world's leading MNCs as part of Beijing's larger goal of developing comprehensive national power. While foreign governments have criticized specific policies associated with Beijing's promotion of Chinese MNCs over the years, under President Trump the US has made a concerted, more encompassing effort to push back against the rise of Chinese MNCs, seeing them as a threat. In this respect, US policy now seeks to obstruct a key pillar of China's economic development and foreign policy strategies.

This paper examines the extent to which Chinese MNCs have been able to break into the top echelon of global companies. Specifically, the paper analyzes trends in the 2,000 companies identified in the Forbes Global 2000 rankings from its inception in 2003 to 2019, both overall and in industries such as aerospace & defense, automobiles, banking, computer hardware, investment services, medical equipment, oil & gas, pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, software & programming, and telecommunications. Although the paper will place particular emphasis on dynamics between American and Chinese companies, it will also assess the position of Chinese companies relative to other countries' companies. As part of these comparisons, the paper will examine how "global" companies are in their reliance on foreign markets in terms of revenue generation, where their assets are deployed, and the nationality of their shareholders. As such, the results will provide a basis for evaluating China's success in nurturing world-class MNCs as well as additional context for examining recent US-China economic tensions.

## **China and the West: Managing the Challenges of Modernity**

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This paper examines the complex relationship between China and the West with a focus on managing the challenges of modernity. The West mainly refers to Western Europe and North America. As an early modernizer, the West provides the classical model of modernization. What are the basic characteristics of Western modernization and how relevant are the lessons for China? There are at least four general reactions to the West in China. First, the traditionists who wish to hold to Chinese tradition and take a negative view of corrupt Western influence. Second, reform-minded Chinese who see the West as a model of advanced civilization and front runner of modernization. China should be a humble and diligent student to catch up with West. Third, the radicals who sharply criticize the Western style modernization. Although the collapse of the Soviet Union destroyed the credibility of Soviet model, there are still strong legacy of the Soviet system including the organizational principle of democratic centralism and Party-dominance over the state. Fourth, the believers of an Asian model of modernization. The successful modernization of Japan, South Korea, and Singapore presents an interesting Asian model of modernization. Since its reform and opening in 1978, China has learned many lessons from its Asian neighbors. Is China repeating the Asian model of modernization, or is China creating a new path to modernity? What is unique about “socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era”? Is it truly transformative or is it just pragmatic application of mixed elements of Western modernization and Asian modernization? Is China still a student of other modernizers, or has China discovered a new path to modernity? If there is a viable Chinese way, then what are the essential features of Chinese modernization? This paper will examine such challenging and consequential questions.

## **Greening the Belt While Paving the Road? China’s Environmental Diplomacy Challenge**

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The rise of China and the pollution in China have been two intertwined images of the 21st century. One of the challenges that China’s foreign policy faces in the 21st century revolves around its leadership in global and regional environmental initiatives. The policy shift on climate change at the 2016 Paris Climate Summit and the personal negotiations of Presidents Xi Jinping and Barack Obama showed a willingness to work cooperatively with the United States on achieving global goals toward limiting climate change. For China, the abrupt announcement of the Trump Administration that it is leaving the Paris Accord is an opportunity to assume a leadership role in climate policy.

Seizing this opportunity, however, must also deal with China's major program – the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). There is little doubt but that China is now seeking to portray its efforts as environmentally friendly. The foreign policy question is how well this effort has worked. This study will seek to evaluate external perceptions, both official and media, of major developing countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Kenya which have expressed support for the BRI and contrast them with other countries such as India which have resisted it. The focus will be the way in which the environmental impact of the BRI is characterized by these countries. In the case of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the power plants built were half coal-fired and half renewables, something the Pakistani government proudly touted. Are other participants seeing it this way as well?

### South Pacific Islands in China's Diplomacy: Small States, Big Impact

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Research on Chinese foreign policy typically focuses on China's grand strategy and relations with major powers. Though China's multi-directional diplomacy has reached every corner of the earth, little study has been done regarding China's relations with small nations in faraway lands. This paper examines latest developments in China-South Pacific relations and attempts to address the following questions: What are China's objectives in the South Pacific? How has China expanded its involvement and influence in the region through institutionalization? What are the significance and impact?

This paper discusses China-South Pacific relations in the context of China's rise and growing power rivalry between the United States and China. Like in other regions, China's diplomacy in the South Pacific has become more sophisticated by institutionalizing its diplomatic and economic activities. In the South Pacific, such regional institutions include Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and South Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO). The paper suggests that by being heavily involved in regional institutions as well as extending its own diplomatic initiatives to the South Pacific, China has become an influential and important part of local political economy and is therefore able to better withstand counterforces from regional and global rivals such as Australia and the United States.