

## **Is togetherness a third option to choosing between ‘us’ or ‘them’?**

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**ABSTRACT:** National interest should be extended to common interests. Therefore, national interest is to be considered from a perspective of equity of interests. In June 2018, global media outlets<sup>2</sup> reported, 'Xi says China must lead way in reform of global governance', referring to the fact that China has sought a greater say in global organizations in line with its growing economic and diplomatic clout, and that Beijing has cast itself as a responsible member of the international community. In the context of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (B&RI) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP<sup>3</sup>), this paper attempts to shed light on the new features of global governance and the need to pursue a compromise between national interest, responsible sovereignty, and balance and equity of interests. Understanding global governance as the management of several formal, informal, multilateral and multilevel processes of consensus-forming, with the purpose of shaping the international order, this paper seeks to identify the new trends and the ultimate role of sovereign units in the context of quasi-global institutions. It further attempts to answer the question, 'how shall we understand national interest in the context of global governance?' This paper adopts geopolitical and geo-economic perspectives grounded in the theories of international relations parity, political science concepts, qualitative research methodology and semi-structured interviews. However, this research has two important limitations: it neither discusses security theories nor addresses the issues of national interest in relation to non-sovereign international actors which are another important contributor to global governance. Finally, the expression 'national interest' refers to a set of interests resulting from a national political organization expressed as a form of 'state interests'.

**Key Words:** Global Governance, Globalism, Community of Shared Future, National Interest, China, B&RI, Common Interests, Responsible Sovereignty.

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### **Short BIO**

Francisco José Leandro received a PhD in political science and international relations from the Catholic University of Portugal in 2010. From 2016 to 2017 he joined a post-doctoral research programme on state monopolies in China - One belt one road studies. In 2014 and 2017, he was awarded the Institute of European Studies in Macau (IEEM) Academic Research Grant, which is a major component of the Asia-Europe Comparative Studies Research Project. From 2014 to 2018, he was the Coordinator of the Institute of Social and Legal Studies, Faculty of Humanities at the University of Saint Joseph, Macau, China. Currently, he is Associate Professor and Assistant-Dean at the Institute for Research on Portuguese-Speaking Countries at the City University of Macau, China. His most recent book, published in 2018, is titled Steps of Greatness: The Geopolitics of OBOR.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Westphalia concept of sovereignty laid the foundations of the current international order, and ensuing concepts, strategies and schools of thought deriving from it have to some extent shaped current state foreign policies. Shimko (2017, p. 27) asserted that foreign policies 'are there because national citizens are affected by what happens beyond their national borders'. This paper grew from a need to understand the future of global governance in relation to the latest developments in initiatives such as the Belt and Road initiative (B&RI) and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which are regional and global access strategies. These were described by Lu Shumin<sup>4</sup> as 'platform[s] for dialogue [between] China and the world'. The fate of

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<sup>2</sup> Thomson Reuters, 23 June 2018, retrieved on 26 June from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-diplomacy/xi-says-china-must-lead-way-in-reform-of-global-governance-idUSKBN1JJ0GT?il=0> and Arab News, 23 June 2018, retrieved on 26 June from <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1326826/world>

<sup>3</sup>RCEP is basically a FTA between the 10 members of ASEAN - Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam - and other six countries: Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand.

<sup>4</sup> The Chinese Ambassador Lu Shumin addressing Dialogue IV - 2018 International Conference on Belt and Road and Macao's Development, held in Macao on 6-7 June 2018.

the B&RI will affect millions of people worldwide. The ‘peaceful rise’ of China as a dominant regional and leading global power calls for an academic scrutiny of emerging concepts and approaches towards national interest, in the light of a new model of pragmatic global cooperation. This newmodel has infrastructural accessconnectivity as its rationale and is deeply rooted in ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’, which in turn is strongly influenced by Confucianism.National interest is and will continue to be a significant concept in international relations and political scienceand national interest constitutes the centre of gravity of external political action. Globalism and multilateralism cannot be regarded merely as an ideology, but as the only option for stability, development and peace. Therefore, national interest is likely to remain a key issue in global governance, because it is a crucial factor in state decision-making and in state-to-state interplay.In the same line of thought, the effectiveness of multilateral forms of global governance, is highly dependent on the acceptance of the fact that common interests are not necessarily opposedto national interest.

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs - United Nations (2014)<sup>5</sup> defined in the following terms: ‘Global governance [stand for an integrated multi-dimension of governance and not a single dimension of economic or security - Furthermore, it does not refer toan international government of the ‘global commons’, but addresses all the matters beneficial for the community of states, such as development, sustainability, and human security] encompasses the totality of institutions, policies, norms, procedures [it addresses the idea of visible but formal and informal processes, taking place simultaneously at several levels and involving different actors] and initiatives through which [sovereign] States [and non-state actors] and their citizens try to bring more predictability, stability and order to their responses to transnational challenges. Effective global governance can only be achieved with effective [comprehending the three dimensions of the exercise of sovereign rights - inter-governmental, intra-governmental, and extra-governmental] international cooperation...’ In addition, Flores and Velazquez (2018, p.7)<sup>6</sup> quotes Bevir (2011, p. 1) “governance refers to theories and issues of social coordination and the nature of all patterns of rule”. [...] global governance focuses on social coordination at the international level; in other words, global governance is based on different areas of human activity where there is a confluence of governance...’ to suggest that governance calls for a certain advancement of comprehensiveness, putting together different domains such as InternationalOrganizationsGovernance, Global SecurityGovernance, Global Economic Governance, Global Sustainability Governance, and Global Civil Society Governance.Finally, Department of Economic and Social Affairs - United Nations (2014)<sup>7</sup>, put forward the five principles [critical] to guiding the reforms of global governance and global rules:

- (1) Common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities: This principle calls for recognizing differences among countries in terms of their contribution and historical responsibilities in generating common problems, as well as divergences in financial and technical capacities, in order to address shared challenges. This principle also acknowledges the diversity of national circumstances and policy approaches - a diversity which should be embedded in the architecture of global governance as an intrinsic feature of the global community, not as an exception to general rules;
- (2) Subsidiarity: Issues ought to be addressed at the lowest level capable of addressing them. This principle implies that some problems can be handled well and efficiently at the local, national, sub-regional and regional levels reducing the number of issues that need to be tackled at the international and supranational level. Subsidiarity suggests an important role for regional cooperation in addressing issues of mutual concern;
- (3) Inclusiveness, transparency, accountability: Global governance institutions need to be representative of, and accountable to, the entire global community, while decision-making procedures need to be democratic, inclusive and transparent. Robust governance implies mutual accountability, verified by transparent and credible mechanisms and processes to ensure that agreed commitments and duties are fulfilled;
- (4) Coherence: Definitions of global rules and processes need to rest on comprehensive approaches, including the assessment of possible trade-offs, so that actions in different areas will not undermine or disrupt one another, but instead be mutually reinforcing. Enhanced coherence is also needed between the international and national spheres of policymaking. This also requires improved coordination among various stakeholders and enhanced information sharing;
- (5) Responsible sovereignty: This principle recognizes that policy cooperation is the best way to achieve national interests in the global public domain. It also requires Governments and States to be fully respectful of the sovereignty of other nations so as to fulfil agreed policy outcomes.

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<sup>5</sup>Department of Economic and Social Affairs - United Nations (2014). Policy Note - Global governance and global rules for development in the post-2015 era Committee for Development Policy, p.1 – adaptation based on Rajagopal, Balakrishnan (2013). Global governance: Old and new challenges. 169-178. 10.18356/9a0243c7-en

<sup>6</sup>Dominguez, Roberto; Flores, Rafael Velazquez (2018). Global Governance, Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of International Studies, p.7.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs - United Nations (2014). Policy Note - Global governance and global rules for development in the post-2015 era Committee for Development Policy, p. VII

Therefore, the discussion presented in this paper on the national interest, is based on the concept of sovereign responsibility.

### **What is National Interest?**

The concept of national interest, as a formulation derived from the Westphalian concept of sovereignty (which is grounded in the notions of equality and supremacy), has been the object of the attention of a great number of scholars, as seen in the abundant academic literature flooded by definitions and categories. The concept of national interest is associated with a normative or 'ought to be' narrative, composed of permanent elements and bold perspectives on the existence and future of sovereign political units. Studying national interest can improve our understanding of standards for policy formulation and of rationales for international strategic state action, respecting 'uniqueness' and the necessity of forging a sort of 'togetherness'. As such, studying national interest paves the way to different modes of political organization in the context of global governance. Some politicians and scholars, such as Scott (2005), have suggested that national interest is empty of substantive content, while others, such as Lord Palmerston, have argued that 'nations have no permanent enemies and allies; they only have permanent interests'. Since the Monroe Doctrine (1823) and later the President Trump's inauguration (2017), there has been an ongoing narrative in which national interest is used to justify a sort of national isolationism and a self-centred attitude in the global arena. The debate has gone even further, with some scholars (especially realists) questioning the compatibility between the international rule of law and national interest. These scholars include John Mearsheimer, for whom offensive realism is central. Offensive realism is about 'maximizing' power, assuming that 'states can never be certain about the intention of other states', that 'the most basic motive driving states is survival... states are instrumentally rational' (Mearsheimer, Winter 1994/1995, p. 10), that 'states fear each other' (Mearsheimer, Winter 1994/1995, p. 11), that 'each state in the international system aims to guarantee its own survival', and, finally, that 'states in the international system aim to maximize their relative power positions over other states. The reason is simple: the greater the military advantage one state has over other states, the more secure it is' (Mearsheimer, Winter 1994/1995, pp. 11-12). Offensive realism appears to have won over dominant minds in the United States, as a kind of legitimization discourse under the cloak of national economic security.

Morgenthau was among the first to contribute to the study of national interest. In 1949 he wrote: 'The choice of ends and means of foreign policy is of necessity predetermined in a dual way: by the objectives to be promoted and by the power available for the pursuit of these objectives. Self-preservation being the primary objective of foreign policy' (1949, p. 210), and: 'Between these two conceptions of foreign policy, the national interest and moral principles, there can be no compromise... When a policy of generosity and idealism appears to be incompatible with the national interest, he [statesman] must make up his mind and choose one or the other. A foreign policy...which vacillates between these alternatives... will neither reap the benefits of the one nor avoid the pitfalls of the other' (1949, p. 212). Morgenthau appears to view national interest as a combination of the means for sustaining and the need to identify the guarantors of state existence, with little room for morality. Navari (2016, p. 49) observed that 'the critical question in 1949 was not the technical content of national interest, but rather its use as a guide or fundamental principle in foreign policy.' Morgenthau seems to associate national interest with the selection of national objectives vis-a-vis other states, making it the only acceptable criterion for directing state action in foreign affairs. Navari interprets Morgenthau's idea of self-preservation as a criteria of action in relation to the behaviour of other states. Morgenthau (1952a, p. 972) also suggested that national interest is composed of two factors, one rationally demanded and, therefore, of necessity ('a residual meaning') and the other changeable and decided by situations. Morgenthau further argued, 'In a world where a number of sovereign nations compete with and oppose each other for power, the foreign policies of all nations must necessarily refer to their survival as their minimum requirements. Thus, all nations do what they cannot help but do: protect their physical, political, and cultural identity against encroachments by other nations.' In the same year, Morgenthau (1952b) defined national interest as 'self-preservation'. In his assertions, Morgenthau appears to associate national interest with long-standing conditions of state existence, as well as with the circumstances, opportunities and threats arising from the international relations arena. Hence in this view, foreign affairs policy corresponds to the permanent need to contribute to state self-preservation. Further, according to Morgenthau, national interest is a self-centred concept.

The difficulties associated with the concept of national interest do not stop there. Wolfers (1952, p. 481) argued, 'In a very vague and general way "national interest" does suggest a direction of policy which can be distinguished from several others which may present themselves as alternatives. It indicates that the policy is designed to promote demands, which are ascribed to the nation rather than to individuals, sub-national groups or mankind as a whole. It emphasizes that the policy subordinates other interests to those of the nation. But beyond this, it has very little meaning.' Wolfers seemed to classify national interest as a special category of state interests, which promotes national demands and overrides other categories of interests. Brodie (1973, p. 343), on the other hand, proposed that vital interests 'are [instead] the product of fallible human judgment, on matters

concerning which agreement within the nation is usually less than universal'. This would make national interest a set of vital circumstantial interests depending on the subjective interpretation of the leading political establishment in a certain political cycle. That is what Nuechterlein (1976, p. 247) concluded when he defined national interest as, 'the perceived needs and desires of one sovereign state in relation to other sovereign states comprising the external environment'. Taking this into account, national interest appears to be a set of circumstantial, subjective and shared national demands, encompassing not only the state's need to exist, but also the national desire to exist in a certain way vis-a-vis other sovereign states. Nye (1991, p. 54) accordingly described national interest as 'simply the set of interests that are widely shared by Americans in their relations with the rest of the world. The national interest is broader than private interests, though it is hardly surprising that various groups try to equate their interests with the national interest.' The diffuse nature of the concept of national interest has been addressed by several scholars, namely by Jervis (1994, p. 856), who argued that a nation could legitimately be considered to have concerns of its own, and that, moreover, 'the concerns of segments of the population' could 'legitimately be put aside' in favour of 'the wider good'. Along the same lines, Hoffman (1996, p. 172) asserted that national interest 'is not self-evident'. Shimko (2017, p. 26) suggested that national interest is 'problematic', that it has a degree of 'elasticity' and 'is not an 'objective thing''. He further observed that 'foreign policy often involves more than one type of interest simultaneously' (2017, p. 29).'

Morgenthau (1952a, p. 977) put it clearly: 'No nation has the resources to promote all desirable objectives with equal vigour; all nations must therefore allocate their scarce resources as rationally as possible. The indispensable precondition of such rational allocation is a clear understanding of the distinction between the necessary and variable elements of the national interest.' As research reveals, the concept of national interest has become associated with a set of circumstantial, subjective, diffused and shared national demands, encompassing different types of interests. Consequently, national interest has been conceptualized according to two categories of national demands: the fundamental state necessities of existence or self-preservation (the survival demand), alongside variable elements driven by national desires to exist in a certain way (the prosperity demand), vis-a-vis other sovereign states. This is in line with Tonelson (1985/1986, p. 49), who has defined national interest as 'a finite set of intrinsically important goals either essential or beneficial to the country's survival, its prosperity, the psychological well-being of its population, or any combination of these'. Dick Nanto et al. (2005, p. CRS-1) took a different approach, suggesting that national interest can be broken down into not two but three components: security (i.e. protection of property, life, and borders), prosperity (i.e. economic welfare and commerce), and values (constructing and protecting an identity which may be cultural, social and/or political). Taking all this into account, national interest appears to be a subjective and plural concept composed of essential, long-standing elements (related to the idea of survival or security, including the preservation of indigenous identity), and beneficial, variable-beneficial elements (linked to the circumstantial political interpretations of prosperity).

The two categories of national demands presented above were conceived from an approach based on classical realism, which views the sovereign state as free of 'Leviathan' propensities: the state that legitimates violence in pursuit of national interest at any cost. Hobbes, Machiavelli and Morgenthau, and later Mearsheimer, were christened the 'fathers of realism', because they proposed the abandonment of morality in global politics. Remarkably, in 1952 Morgenthau introduced the idea of compatibility of interests. In his own words (Morgenthau 1952a, p. 977), 'the national interest of a nation, which is conscious not only of its own interests but also of that of other nations [...] must be defined in terms compatible with the latter. In a multinational world this is a requirement of political morality.' In fact, I am not sure whether this idea of compatibility with other nations' national interests is grounded in political morality. It seems that the nature of national interest itself, namely the survival imperative, side-by-side with the prosperity demand, imposes on national interest the necessity of compatibility as a means of practical feasibility. Compatibility is not a matter of morality but of pragmatism. Morgenthau (1952a, p. 978) pointed out the real reason why compatibility is vital: 'national interest is subject to all the hazards of misinterpretation, usurpation, and misjudgement... To minimize these hazards is the first task of a foreign policy, which seeks the defense of the national interest by peaceful means.' It is putting compatibility as the first task of foreign policy which best serves national interest in the endeavour of a framework of peaceful co-existence. Generally speaking, national interest incorporates all the activities of the state vis-a-vis other sovereign (and non-sovereign) in the international arena, not only those activities contributing to secure its existence, but also activities which advance an understanding of development. Osgood (1953, pp. 4-6) placed 'survival or self-preservation' as the priority of national interest since everything else depends on this goal. He understood survival as territorial integrity, political independence and the functioning of state institutions. He further categorized other important national interests, including self-sufficiency, prestige and aggrandisement. Joseph Frankel (1970, p. 19) suggested a sort of parity between the national interests of all states 'centred upon the welfare of the nation and the preservation of its political doctrine and national style of life.' When seen as a 'public good' resulting from a long-standing national debate involving all social groups in a nation, national interests are, in the words of Holloway (2006, p. 2), 'enduring interests', because they survive

long political cycles with a certain degree of stability. In a similar vein, Krasner (1978) suggested three characteristics of national interest: (1) it is composed of objectives related to general societal goals; (2) it persists over time (regardless the different political cycles); and (3) it has a consistent ranking of importance. Holloway (2006, p. 2) further associated national interest with national security, political autonomy, national unity, economic prosperity and principled self-image (identity).

Where the Chinese idea of national interest is concerned, three perspectives are at the centre of the debate. First, in the words of President Xi (2017, p. 51),<sup>8</sup> ‘We stand firm in safeguarding China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and will never allow the historical tragedy of national division to repeat itself. Any separatist activity is certain to meet with the resolute opposition of the Chinese people. We have the resolve, the confidence, and the ability to defeat separatist attempts for “Taiwan independence” in any form. We will never allow anyone, any organization, or any political party, at any time or in any form, to separate any part of Chinese territory from China!’ Second, in 1974, Deng Xiaoping, then Chairman of the Delegation of the People’s Republic of China to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, stated that political independence and economic independence are inseparable: ‘Without political independence, it is impossible to achieve economic independence; without economic independence, a country’s independence is incomplete and insecure.’ The idea of economic independence as the foundation of political independence has made a structural contribution to China’s concept of national interest. Third, the idea of a ‘community of common destiny’ (literally, ‘community of common destiny for humankind’—renleimingyungongtongti) has become one of President Xi Jinping’s most common slogans in public speeches, appearing close to a hundred times since his inception, according to Rolland (2018). In 2017, the phrase appeared on a number of different occasions: in Davos during the World Economic Forum, at the Beijing’s Belt and Road Forum, at the APEC Summit in November, at the World Political Party Dialogue, at the Wuzhen World Internet Conference, and at the South-South Human Rights Forum held in Beijing in December. Most importantly, the same idea appeared in Xi Jinping’s 19th Party Congress speech in October (2017, p. 6)<sup>9</sup>: ‘China champions the development of a community of shared future for mankind and has encouraged the evolution of the global governance system. With this, we have seen a further rise in China’s international influence, ability to inspire, and power to shape, and China has made a great contribution to global peace and development.’

#### **What sort of interests comprise national interest?**

Heine (2013, p. 58) has provided what we consider to be the central piece of the ‘national interest puzzle’: ‘From the unitary, centralized state guided by a narrowly conceived notion of the national interest, we have thus moved to a more fragmented entity, in some ways hollowed out from above and from below.’ Indeed, a narrow conception of national interest still stands as an obstacle to global governance and to considering vital common interests as part of every domestic conception of national interest.

In an attempt to shed light on the concept of national interest, we return to Joseph Nye. In 1999, he stated, ‘the national interest is simply the set of shared priorities regarding relations with the rest of the world.’ Similarly, according to Morgenthau (1952a, p. 973), ‘The idea of interest is indeed of the essence of politics and, as such, unaffected by the circumstances of time and place. Thucydides’ statement, born of the experiences of ancient Greece that ‘identity of interest is the surest of bonds whether between states or individuals’.’ Thus, national interest mainly refers to a set of identified state objectives or needs (an interest is a need combined with an expectation), carefully considered in relation to other states, organized according to their level of importance, which receive an allocation of resources, depending on the required or perceived level of (dis)satisfaction. National interest is a locus of state legitimacy because it acknowledges the views and aspirations of the majority of citizens. National interest is a locus of state power because it is pursued by states in their relationships with other states. Shimko (2017, p. 27) stated that national interests are associated with the vital and critical needs and beneficial desires of sovereign states. But, as Heine (2013) observed, national interest in this perspective is domestically conceived, putting the state and only that state at the centre of the question.

Nye’s proposed concept is dominantly realistic, encompassing bi- or multi-conflictual or mutually exclusive objectives. What seems to be missing from this formulation (or at least what is not clearly articulated) is the possibility of different sovereign political units having non-conflictual, convergent, complementary or interdependent objectives. Hence, we should consider extending the discussion of national interest to include compatibility and interdependency of interests between sovereign states. Following this, the next step would be to inquire the extent to which national interest could also encompass compatibility with the common interests of humankind. The issue of interdependent national interests should also be considered.

As Shelton (2009, p. 83) explained, ‘issues of common concern are those that inevitably transcend the boundaries of a single state and require collective action in response... the notion of common concerns or a global set of values and interests independent of the interests of states.’ The expression ‘common concern’ has

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<sup>8</sup>Retrieved in August 2018, from [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2017-11/03/c\\_136725942.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2017-11/03/c_136725942.htm)

<sup>9</sup>Retrieved in August 2018, from [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2017-11/03/c\\_136725942.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2017-11/03/c_136725942.htm)

been inserted into the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). Initially, global common concerns were those driven by environmental issues, and the expression was literally associated with (or: related to) environmental sustainability. Later the focus was the so-called ‘common heritage of Humankind’. However, the expression ‘common concern’ has rapidly developed into a more comprehensive concept, encompassing environment, economic sustainability, all major development issues, international justice, and peace and security. The following quote emphasizes the comprehensive nature of the concept of common concerns: ‘As Commissioners, however, we were acting not in our national roles but as individuals; and as we worked, nationalism and the artificial divides between "industrialized" and "developing", between East and West, receded. In their place emerged a common concern for the planet and the interlocked ecological and economic threats with which its people, institutions, and governments now grapple(UN, 1987, p. 7).’However, the association between environment and development did not fully express the concept. The same United Nations report, (Chapter 11, p. 239) acknowledged that the expression common concerns was associated with peace, security, development and the environment. The same document gave an example of how all these factors are related ‘A number of factors affect the connection between environmental stress, poverty, and security, such as inadequate development policies, adverse trends in the international economy, inequities in multi-racial and multi-ethnic societies, and pressures of population growth. These linkages among environment, development, and conflict are complex and, in many cases, poorly understood. But a comprehensive approach to international and national security must transcend the traditional emphasis on military power and armed competition. The real sources of insecurity also encompass unsustainable development, and its effects can become intertwined with traditional forms of conflict in a manner that can extend and deepen the latter... (Point 6) Poverty, injustice, environmental degradation, and conflict interact in complex and potent ways(Chapter 11, pp. 239-240, point 4).’

We do not here intend to discuss security theories, although the concept of national interest is at the heart of national security, combining different dimensions into self-preservation and prosperity. Likewise, the concept of national interest incorporates the idea of compatibility with common interests, and a certain level of interdependency with other sovereign political units. Global interdependency in many areas has reached a point of no return, acknowledging that a good part of national interest cannot be fulfilled without the incorporation of common interests into the basic notion of national interest.

When we refer to common interests, we associate self-preservation and prosperity with interests (or needs) that are not exclusively and directly under the control of a single sovereign political unit. These common interests are not protected, are capable (in the long term) of affecting states in a non-reversible manner (e.g. climate change, marine plastic pollution, armed conflicts, migration and extinction of species). These interests are not limited by traditional sovereignty boundaries, are capable of disrupting the national interest of domestic states and require long-term global management. In the category of common interests, we include those interests which require long-term common action to prevent them negatively affecting self-preservation and prosperity. In addition, the fulfilment of some national interests requires positive (or interdependent) action from other sovereign units (e.g. freedom of commerce and trade, the fight against international terrorism, the efforts to sustain development and to eliminate extreme poverty). Problems of common concern will increasingly be at the top of the international agenda, especially since they have long-lasting adverse effects, potentially devastating to future generations. The common concern of humankind therefore includes a strong focus on intergenerational equity (Bowling; Pierson; Ratté, 2007, p. 3) and ‘[implies] intergenerational equity and fair burden sharing.<sup>10</sup> Common interests are an unavoidable issue for responsible sovereign states and an important part of securing the national interest of future generations. Timoshenko (1986)<sup>11</sup> stressed, ‘Today, we cannot secure security for one state at the expense of the other. Security can only be universal, but security cannot only be political or military, it must be as well ecological, economical [sic], and social. It must ensure the fulfilment of the aspirations of humanity as a whole.’ The perspective of national interest, which arose from the Westphalian Treaties, still exists, but it is unable to cope with the current global challenges. A good part of state national interest cannot be fulfilled in isolation from the community of nations. There are interests which benefit all states. As Capaldo (2015) stated, ‘The international legal order is no longer that of the Westphalian era, as a result of the deep transformation of the traditional model of the international community and its constitutive structure.’ CaiTuo (2011, pp. 370-371) asserted that globalization has strengthened interdependency and therefore “global interests have been greatly enhanced... Globalization begins to demonstrate the common interests of mankind, which proposes the historical issue of harmonization of relationships between common interests of mankind and national interests.” Fulfilling state national interests must take into consideration the common interest and interdependency of interests, and involve international institutionalism, multilateralism, creativity, innovation, international cooperation and compliance mechanisms.

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<sup>10</sup> Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Biological Diversity, Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Biological Diversity on the Work of its Second Session (March 7, 1991), 4.  
<https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/iccbd/bdn-02-awg-02/official/bdn-02-awg-02-05-en.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> A. S. Timoshenko (1986). Institute of State and Law, USSR Academy of Sciences, WCED Public Hearing, Moscow, 11 Dec.

Along these lines, Ramesh (2013, pp. 74 and 84) asserted that 'states are multipurpose organizations pursuing multiple goals simultaneously', and described national interest as 'a balance of interests'. He went on to say that 'national interest is erroneous as a description of the empirical reality, substitutes tautology for explanation, and is unhelpful as a guide to policy'; 'a balance of competing interests' is superior on all three counts of description, explanation and prescription. In addition, it captures the human agency and allows for human error and multiple balances as weighted by different people.'

At this point it is reasonable to inquire what sorts of interests comprise national interests. The question of what the components of state national interest are is challenging, especially with regard to any attempt at modelling or generic formulation. The theory of national interest has received a great deal of criticism, one of which is from Robert Osgood (1953, p. 4) who stated: 'National Interest is understood to mean a state of affairs valued solely for its benefit to the nation. [It involves] the motive of national egoism.' Others were more biting in their criticism, such as Beauchamp (2014) who went further to describe it as a 'toxic cult' or 'the cult worships at the altar of American selfishness'. This is why the theory of national interest is often associated with the idea of exclusively self-serving interest with no regard for common or interdependent interests. The Trump administration's foreign affairs doctrine, with the disconcerting tagline 'only America first', is a vivid example of the negative connotations of national interest. It is precisely for this reason that we should review the concept of national interest in the context of the new geopolitics created by the Chinese B&R initiative. There are national and collective benefits that cannot be achieved in isolation, and those benefits cover the interests of survival, of prosperity and of identity.

Considering the different categorizations of national interest presented by several scholars, for the purpose of this research, we consider the following:

- Morgenthau's (1952a, p. 977) categorization of interests was two-fold: 'The indispensable precondition of such rational allocation is a clear understanding of the distinction between the necessary<sup>12</sup> and variable<sup>13</sup> elements of the national interest.' He further stated that the 'national interest of a nation, which is conscious not only of its own interests but also of that of other nations must be defined in terms compatibility with the latter. In a multinational world this is a requirement of political morality; in an age of total war it is also one of the conditions for survival.' This categorization sees the world from a classical realism perspective, and so does not explore constructivist approaches and bases the question of survival exclusively on the state, with no regard for the circumstances falling out of its control as a single sovereign political unit;
- Robinson (1967) classified national interest as primary<sup>14</sup>, secondary<sup>15</sup>, permanent<sup>16</sup>, variable<sup>17</sup>, general<sup>18</sup>, identical<sup>19</sup>, specific<sup>20</sup>, complimentary<sup>21</sup> and conflicting<sup>22</sup>, a classification which remains pertinent. This categorization is instructive for the purpose of establishing parity between sovereign political units;

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<sup>12</sup> Morgenthau (1952a, p. 972) - Necessary – "Thus all nations do what they cannot help but do: protect their physical, political, and cultural identity against encroachments by other nations"; (p. 977) "The necessary elements of the national interest have a tendency to swallow up the variable elements so that in the end all kinds of objectives, actual or potential, are justified in terms of national survival."

<sup>13</sup> Morgenthau (1952a, p. 972) - Variable - "Variable and determined by circumstances of time and place or by the necessity of securing the vital components."

<sup>14</sup> Robinson (1967, p. 140) - Primary interests include protection of the nation's physical, political, and cultural identity and survival against encroachment from the outside. Primary interests can never be compromised or traded. All nations hold these same interests and must defend them at any price.

<sup>15</sup> Robinson (1967, p. 140) - Secondary interests are those falling outside of but contributing to it. For example, protecting citizens abroad and maintaining proper immunities for a nation's diplomats are secondary interests.

<sup>16</sup> Robinson (1967, p. 140) - Permanent interests are those which are relatively constant over long periods of time; they vary with time, but only slowly. For instance, for many centuries Great Britain has had an interest in the freedom to navigate the seas and in a narrow definition of coastal waters.

<sup>17</sup> Robinson (1967, p. 140) - Variable interests are those which are a function of "all the cross currents of personalities, public opinion, sectional interests, partisan politics, and political and moral folkways" of a given nation. In other words, they are what a given nation at any particular time chooses to regard as its national interests. In this respect the variable interest may diverge from both primary and permanent interests. For example, Great Britain in 1938 chose to regard certain events bearing on the security of Czechoslovakia as not within its interest.

<sup>18</sup> Robinson (1967, p. 140) - General interests are those which the nation can apply in a positive manner to a large geographic area, to a large number of nations, or in several specific fields (such as economics, trade, diplomatic intercourse, international law, etc.). An example would be the British interest in the maintenance of a balance of power on the European continent.

<sup>19</sup> Robinson (1967, p. 141) - Identical interests between nations obviously are those national interests which those nations hold in common. For example, Great Britain and the United States have had an interest in assuring that the European continent is not dominated by a single power.

<sup>20</sup> Robinson (1967, p. 141) - Specific interests are those positive interests not included in the general interests. Specific interests are usually closely defined in time and/or space and often are the logical outgrowth of general interests. For instance, historically Britain has regarded the Low Countries as an absolute prerequisite for the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe.

<sup>21</sup> Robinson (1967, p. 141) - Complementary interests between nations are those which, although not identical, at least are capable of forming the basis of agreement on specific issues. England has an interest in maintaining the independence of Portugal from Spain as a means of controlling the regions of the Atlantic Ocean off the Iberian Peninsula, while Portugal has an interest in British maritime hegemony as a means of defence against Spain.

<sup>22</sup> Robinson (1967, p. 141) - Conflicting interests are those not included in the two previous categories. It should be noted, however, that today's conflicting interests can be transformed tomorrow, through diplomacy, occurrence of events, or the passage of time into common or

- The report prepared by the Commission on America's National Interests (2000, p. 2) identified a hierarchy of the USA's national interests: vital interests (for survival and well-being—strictly indispensable)<sup>23</sup>; extremely important interests (those that may compromise vital interests)<sup>24</sup>; important interests (those that have negative consequences for vital interests)<sup>25</sup>; and less important or secondary interests (desirable conditions with little direct impact on vital interests)<sup>26</sup>. We would critique this hierarchy of interests as dominated by self-centred interests (categorized as vital), having little or no regard for other types of interests in terms of allocation of resources. It appears from this list that common and interdependent interests have no part in America's hierarchy of interests;
- Ramesh (2013) defined national interests as a subjective (circumstantial evaluation) balance of competing interests, involving states and non-state actors.

These four categorizations of national interests all failed to recognize the existence of global common interests, which is a pre-requisite for addressing the issue of global governance. Effective global governance can only be exercised with real international cooperation between international agencies, the private sector, and sovereign units. International cooperation as we understand it refers to constructive processes of building multilateral institutional mechanisms and fostering intergovernmental relations, resulting in decision-making which addresses common interests, maximizes complimentary or interdependent interests, and provides for non-violent dispute settlement mechanisms. The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (2014, p. VI) stated that 'the current global governance system is not properly equipped to manage the growing economic integration and interdependence among countries... Globalization tends to accentuate interdependencies among countries... global governance structures and rules are characterized by severe asymmetries in terms of access, scope and outcomes. While developing countries must abide by and/or shoulder the effects of global governance rules and regulations, they have limited influence in shaping them.' As mentioned before, the same Committee (2014, p. VII) presented five principles to guide the reforms of global governance and global rules: (1) common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities; (2) subsidiarity; (3) inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability; (4) coherence; and (5) responsible sovereignty. The principle of responsible sovereignty recognizes that policy cooperation to contribute to 'common interests' is the best way to achieve national interests in the global public domain, simply because they are vital to all, and due to the fact they cannot be achieved in isolation. It also requires governments and states to be fully respectful of the sovereignty of other nations so as to fulfil agreed policy outcomes. Responsible sovereignty is necessary for the efficient delivery of the global public goods that are relevant for the management of interdependence and the achievement of global sustainable development (2014, p. 16). According to Greenstock (2013, p. 111), responsible sovereignty acknowledges that the interests of individual nationals (or corporations) abroad are also part of the state's national interests and that 'every foreign ministry is tasked to look after the interests of its nationals abroad'. Consequently, responsible sovereignty calls for an extended scrutiny of national interest, acknowledging the following:

- a) Each state should include in its own scrutiny of interests the fact that inter-generational interests and the interests of future generations are also part of the current national interest;
- b) The satisfaction or at least the compatibility of the critical interests of other states is also an important part of each state's national interests as a matter of peace and pragmatism;
- c) There is a set of common interests shared among all states. The fulfilment of common interests can only be achieved through positive cooperation, contribution and acknowledging common interests as part of national interest;
- d) National interest involves a permanent subjective evaluation of the balance of competing interests, involving states and non-state actors;
- e) The interest of nationals (and corporations) abroad are part of the state's national interest.

Therefore, another possible categorization (or hierarchy) of national interest could be organized in three-tier ranking comprising global common interests; self-preservation interests; and progress or development interests – this category is divided into two groups. The following table does not reflect an analysis based on a

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complementary interests. The same thing might be said about the possibility of transforming identical or complementary interests into conflicting interests.

<sup>23</sup> Commission on America's National Interests (2000, p. 5) - Vital national interests are conditions that are strictly necessary to safeguard and enhance Americans' survival and well-being in a free and secure nation.

<sup>24</sup> Commission on America's National Interests (2000, p. 6) - Extremely important national interests are conditions that, if compromised, would severely prejudice but not strictly imperil the ability of the US government to safeguard and enhance the well-being of Americans in a free and secure nation.

<sup>25</sup> Commission on America's National Interests (2000, p. 7) - Important national interests are conditions that, if compromised, would have major negative consequences for the ability of the US government to safeguard and enhance the well-being of Americans in a free and secure nation.

<sup>26</sup> Commission on America's National Interests (2000, p. 8) - Less important or secondary national interests are not unimportant. They are important and desirable conditions, but ones that have little direct impact on the ability of the US government to safeguard and enhance the well-being of Americans in a free and secure nation.

single state, but is a generic and illustrative observation of a possible categorization of state interests. The arrangements regarding different types of interest with varying levels of importance are circumstantial and the necessary means are allocated proportionally according to the established priorities. Nevertheless, any foreign policy of a responsible state should address more than one type of interest simultaneously. Clearly, the national interest is not a static concept, as Kevin Rudd(2018)<sup>27</sup> observed: ‘For any state, therefore, the concept of “core national interests” varies over time and will be defined by the government of the day.’ But a responsible state should bear in mind that survival or preservation needs (including identity), prosperity demands (including a political reading of the concept) and a positive contribution to common interests. As Shimko (2017, p. 31) argued, ‘In foreign policy prioritizing interests it is essential because national resources are limited.’ The responsible state prioritizes national resources, keeping in mind the nature and urgency of national interests according to these three categories. Concerning China, Wang Yisi(2011, p. 71) noted, ‘As Hu announced in July 2009, China’s diplomacy must safeguard the interests of sovereignty, security, and development.’ Dai Bingguo, the state councillor for external relations, further elaborated core interests that should be safeguarded: ‘First, China’s political stability, namely, the stability of the CPC leadership and of the socialist system; second, sovereign security, territorial integrity, and national unification; and third, China’s sustainable economic and social development.’ Dai Bingguo notably excludes the positive contribution of common interest to China’s national interest.

The Components of a State’s National Interest			
Components	Objectives (Enumerative Indicators)	Classification	
Global and Dominantly Interdependent Common Interests	Global Sustainable Peace (Security)	Vital Common Interests <sup>28</sup>	<b>Variable Necessary</b> Intergovernmental equity Requiring a Long Term Harmonization Effort and a permanent positive contribution
	Global Sustainable Development and Environment		
	Global Commons Sustainable Management		
	Stability of International Institutions		
	Stability of Banking, Economic and Trade Systems		
	Enforcement of International Justice and ADR		
	Armaments Control (WMD)		
	Structural Equality of Participation Opportunities		
	...		
Self-preservation Interests (Dominantly Domestic)	Preservation of Culture & Identity	National Critical Interests <sup>29</sup>	<b>Invariable Survival</b> Physical Existence Requires Permanent Engagement and Investment of resources at all costs <sup>30</sup> .
	Stability of Borders (including TW and EEZ)		
	Stability of Political System (Including Representation)		
	Wide Diplomatic Recognition - Ability to Exercise Persuasion and Influence		
	Development of a Positive Image and Reputation		
	Intra-governmental Cooperation		
	International Representation and Participation		
	Minimal Effective Hard Power Capacities		
	...		
Progress or Development <sup>31</sup> Interests  (Promoters of domestic legitimacy – strong state)	Domestic Security of People, Property and Institutions	National Important Interests	<b>Variable Necessary</b> Primarily Domestic Requires solving interdependency challenges
	Robust and Stable Currency Parity		
	Acceptable Level of Human Development		
	Foreign Direct Investment Security		
	Controlled National Debt or Surplus		
	Economic Security		
	Fresh Water and Energy Security		
	Strategic Partnerships		
	...		
	Security of Natural Resources		<b>National Secondary Interests</b>
	Infrastructural Security		Variable Desirable – to be defended under favourable
	Education Security, Research Investment, Literacy		

<sup>27</sup> The President of Asia Society Policy Institute delivered an address to the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore at The Significance of China’s 2018 Central Foreign Policy Work Conference. Retrieved on August 12, 2018 from <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/kevin-rudd-xi-jinping-china-and-global-order>

<sup>28</sup> According to Webster’s dictionary, “vital” means “essential to the existence or continuance of something; indispensable.”

<sup>29</sup> According to Webster’s dictionary, “critical” means “crucial, grave, despairing or decisive.”

<sup>30</sup> Morgenthau (1952a, pp. 976-978).

<sup>31</sup> Adapted from World Bank (2017). World Development Indicators, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The Components of a State's National Interest		
Components	Objectives (Enumerative Indicators)	Classification
	Rate - PISA <sup>33</sup> educational achievement rankings GNI Index and Gross National Income (GNI) (PPP) <sup>34</sup> Food and Health Security Gender Security Communications Security Employment Security Life Expectancy at Birth and Maternal Mortality Environmental Security, Biodiversity, and PM 2.5 Cyber Domain Security Intergovernmental Cooperation The security of nationals and corporations abroad ...	circumstances <sup>32</sup> Peripheral Instrumental Circumstantially Domestic Beneficial parts connected to important interests

We will now explore the three-tiers of national interests in more detail, combining the observations of Morgenthau (1949-1952), Robinson (1967), Krasner (1978), Couto (1988), Greenstock (2013) and Shimko (2017) with our own insights.

- (1) Vital common interests – This set of state interests functions as the promoter of the national interest of succeeding generations and boosts the state's international legitimacy as a positive contributor to the international system. Most common interests, if not addressed properly, tend to have long-lasting adverse effects, potentially devastating to future generations. They are essential to the existence or continuance of human well-being and require long-term harmonizing efforts with other states. Common interests are variable according to the dynamics of international life. Therefore, the protection of common interests is necessary to ensure the development and sustainability of all others categories of national interest. To protect this category of interests, states must deliver a positive and interdependent contribution and share the global burden by making national resources such as military forces available. Military forces may be deployed voluntarily and preventively as foreign affairs tools to leverage state legitimacy, according to the rules of the Charter of the United Nations. Vital common interests of states are exercised jointly and interdependently and are divided into five major groups:
  - a) Promoting the construction of international justice, combining litigation and alternative dispute resolution (examples include international state legal responsibility and legal instruments such as the UNCLOS<sup>35</sup> and the International Criminal Court in relation to genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression);
  - b) Management of natural heritage and protection of sustainable eco-systems (examples include natural disasters, the Paris agreement<sup>36</sup>, the UN sustainable development goals, the common heritage of Humankind, and the global commons);
  - c) Stability of international institutions in the areas of development, banking, commerce and economy (examples: G20, UN, WTO, IMF, WB, and AIIB);
  - d) Safeguarding of peace and security (examples: armed conflicts, WMD, international terrorism, human trafficking, gender crimes, and sea piracy);
  - e) Enforcing a common pattern of human rights standards (examples: refugees, economic migrants, minority groups, and a decent life standard) and promoting human social capital.
- (2) National critical interests – This set of state interests is the guarantor of state existence as an international entity, and asserts the state's relational power vis-a-vis other states. These interests represent the invariable conditions of state existence (territory, political organization and identity), and are associated with permanent and primary or core national values to be protected at any cost. They represent the foundation of statehood. This group of interests at the domestic level include the preservation of the equilibrium within the fundamental security triangle<sup>37</sup>. Critical interests are directly related to the survival imperative of the state as such (according to Morgenthau's political realist approach), and therefore the state is willing to

<sup>33</sup>Program for International Student Assessment.

<sup>32</sup>Morgenthau (1952a, pp. 976-978).

<sup>34</sup>Purchasing Power Parity – Basket of Goods Approach.

<sup>35</sup>The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

<sup>36</sup>In 2015, 196 Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted the Paris Agreement, a new legally binding framework for an internationally coordinated effort to tackle climate change.

<sup>37</sup>Francisco Leandro (2018, p. 164) The domestic security triangle establishes a balanced relationship between the human security of state citizens within the state territory, the security in relation to the responses of state institutions when dealing with citizens' demands, and the progressive and idealistic idea of the state as a political system capable of transforming itself according to the perspectives of its citizens.

allocate all its resources (military and non-military) to achieve, preserve and develop this set of interests. Such interests represent essential core state necessities and, as consequence, they remain long-term domestic inter-generational goals, perceived as dominantly non-negotiable. In this set of interests, states tend to display a very low level of flexibility and the highest level of ambition. Generally speaking, critical interests are part of the political consensus shaping a certain political system and surviving long cycles of political transformation. To preserve their critical interests, states wage wars and conflicts, allocating all their current and potential resources. To protect critical interests, states are willing to compromise a certain level of human security and their citizens are willing to accept it for short periods of time. Critical interests contribute directly to state strength in the sense of constructing a strong state<sup>38</sup>.

(3) Progress or Development Interests

- a) Important interests – These are defined as the conditions determining state stability (social and institutional) and associated with the protection of permanent societal values. These interests are directly related to the welfare of the state and its nationals, and therefore the state is willing to allocate a considerable amount of resources to achieve, expand and preserve these interests. The protection of important interests is crucial to human security and such interests contribute to the preservation of a state's critical interests. They represent generational goals, and are therefore negotiable during value creation in non-zero-sum situations. They may be specific or general, and states tend to develop options to allow for a certain degree of flexibility that helps to maintain a high level of ambition. Important interests are circumstantial and determined or articulated by political consensus on the best way to protect critical interests. They might be adjusted according to different political cycles. To preserve important interests, the state might use diplomatic, economic and military power in a limited manner, proportional to the interest to be protected. Important interests contribute to ensure a substantial level of human security. Important interests have a decisive impact on state goals and they contribute to state power.
- b) Secondary interests – These are defined as the instrumental conditions of state progress and development. Secondary interests contribute to the realization of either critical or important interests. Secondary interests are seen as medium-term goals, and therefore negotiable. To protect secondary interests, states make mutual concessions within frameworks of political games, partnerships, alliances and agreements. Secondary interests are determined by the nature of and opportunity for political debate, forming a majoritarian perspective, which directly helps to safeguard important interests. To defend or preserve secondary interests, states negotiate with circumstantial flexibility. Secondary interests are associated with a positive contribution to state power and strength. Secondary interests contribute to promote a higher development of human security. Secondary interests are by nature mostly circumstantial as they are opportunistic in nature.

**What does B&RI contribute to China's National Interest?**

The B&RI is an infrastructural access-connectivity initiative, composed of collocated elements of connectivity and aiming at establishing a regional and interregional network of economic agents, to facilitate material and immaterial flows. The B&RI is an intergenerational exercise of economic diplomacy that has brought a great deal of hope to many states. Yang Jiechi,<sup>39</sup> in a speech in 2018 at Tsinghua University, stated: 'Five years on, trade between China and other participating countries has exceeded 5 trillion US dollars in cumulative terms, Chinese investment in these countries has exceeded 70 billion dollars and more than 200,000 local jobs have been created. These are clear proof that all relevant countries have benefited from their participation in the Belt and Road Initiative. The initiative is proving to be an enabler of economic growth for many countries, especially developing ones, and it is bringing a new hope for their people. All this is a vivid demonstration of China's efforts toward building a community with a shared future for mankind.'

The B&RI is foremost an exercise of economic diplomacy with a geopolitical rationale capable of raising communities to another level of economic security. As Woolcock and Bayne (2013)<sup>40</sup> asserted, 'economic diplomacy... is about reconciling domestic and international policy objectives in an increasingly

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<sup>38</sup> The expression of "strong state" is used in this context in opposition to the idea of "powerful state". We differentiate strong and weak powers from strong and weak states. Strong and weak powers refer to the traditional distinction among states in terms of their relative military and economic capability (Barry Buzan, 1983, p. 67). Strong and weak states, however, refer to the status of a state as a member of the class of states. The principal distinguishing feature of weak states is their high level of attention to domestically generated threats to society and government security. In other words, weak states either do not have or have failed to create a domestic political and social consensus of sufficient strength to eliminate the large-scale use of force as a major and continuing element in the domestic political life of the nation.

<sup>39</sup> Director of the Office of Foreign Affairs of the Communist Party of China under Party General Secretary Xi Jinping. Retrieved on August 12, 2018, from [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/zyjh\\_665391/t1577242.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1577242.shtml)

<sup>40</sup> Woolcock, Stephen; Bayne, Nicholas (2013). Economic Diplomacy, The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy, Edited by Andrew F. Cooper, Jorge Heine, and Ramesh Thakur, Oxford University Press, p. 308.

interdependent if not global economy... domestic policy objectives cannot be achieved independently of what is happening in the global economy or of the policies of other countries. The degree of interdependence can and does of course fluctuate over time, but there can be little doubt of its importance today.'The B&RI has the potential to operate as an economic enzyme capable of reconciling domestic and international policy objectives to facilitate global governance. The B&RI is an exercise in a long political cycle, in which economic diplomacy is based on the following dimensions of national interest:

- (1) A wide consensus on the terms of each nation's participation, assuming an extensive and careful scrutiny of their national interest and therefore a proportional allocation of resources;
- (2) The domestic ability to formulate national interest outside the traditional self-centred and narrowly conceptualized vision, in which states carefully consider their national and common interests;
- (3) The construction of a new regional and quasi-global financial institutionalism involving multiple participants;
- (4) The willingness to contribute to the construction of sustainable economic solutions;
- (5) A permanent and inclusive political-cultural, multilateral and multi-level dialogue, capable of identifying constructive solutions to unexpected obstacles.

One of the greatest contributions of the B&RI is its potential to push states out of an exclusive narrow domestic definition of self-interest (Heine 2013, p. 58). The success of the B&RI depends on the creation of a balanced network of economic agents, located according to a geo-economic perspective, whose interdependency reinforces the importance of serving their mutual interests. Proximity to markets, production centres, economic integration areas and special economic zones by land, sea and immaterial means will produce a substantive alteration in the way we view geo-economy.

The B&RI has the potential to reinforce the idea of national survival and security identity, as it has been designed to respect sovereign units, integrating their own national interest. It holds promising possibilities to provide variable-beneficial elements of prosperity because it entails a high level of scale economies and economic interfaces, reducing the obstacles between consumers and production centres. The B&RI has the potential to deliver a positive contribution to common interests, because it stands for sustainable progress. There is an old Chinese saying: 'When you eat fruit, do not forget the tree it grew on; when you drink water, do not forget the source it came from.' In a similar way, the B&RI should contribute to common interests, since jeopardizing common interests will likewise impair China's national interest.

## **II. CONCLUSIONS: WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE?**

Before drawing conclusions, I would like to give notice of my personal feelings after being an active participant in the Fourth East Lake Forum on Global Governance. Yes, it was indeed a great opportunity to learn and to networking. Extremely well organized and inclusive, with moments of great academic quality. However, in what concerns the global narrative, I have noticed that the narrative of 'non-Chinese' scholars were mostly conceptual and relational focused. Interestingly, with very few exceptions, the narrative of 'Chinese' scholars was dominantly historical, statistical, factual and economics focused. Therefore, my personal perception is that is along way before we share a common vision of globalization.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, we sought to answer the question, 'how shall we understand national interest in the context of global governance?' Kevin Rudd(2018)<sup>41</sup> stated,

'Broadly speaking, in Chinese, the term "international" or "global" order refers to a combination of the UN, the Bretton Woods Institutions, the G20 and other global plurilateral or multilateral institutions on the one hand; and the US system of global alliances to enforce the US definition of international security on the other. The term "international system" tends to refer to the first half of this international order - namely the complex web of multilateral institutions which operate under international treaty law and which seek to govern the global commons on the basis of the principle of shared sovereignty. As for "global governance", it tends to refer to the actual performance, for good or for ill, be it effective or ineffective, of the "international system" so defined.'

Global governance as a concept associated with the 'performance'(in the sense of proper functioning) of the international system calls for the abandonment of narrow and self-centred conceptualizations of national interest, not for moral reasons, but primarily for pragmatic reasons. Effective global governance requires multilateralism as a driving force and also demands strong international institutionalism, especially with regard to financial institutions. Different conception of multilateralism, fear and uncertainty are vicious threats operating against global institutionalism, and narratives such as 'only America first' are sending the wrong message to any serious attempt to improve global governance. The construction of a strong institutionalism cannot be the exclusive domain of a certain group of states but has to be open to all. The price of peaceful coexistence must be measured by the willingness to accept that 'better for all, is not a synonym of receiving equal

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<sup>41</sup>Rudd, President of Asia Society Policy Institute, delivered an address to the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore at The Significance of China's 2018 Central Foreign Policy Work Conference. Retrieved on August 12, 2018 from <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/kevin-rudd-xi-jinping-china-and-global-order>

benefits (Sales Marques, 2018<sup>42</sup>)'. It must be a fair process of giving the same opportunities for all, guaranteeing a minimal amount of benefits for all. To make it possible, we need to modernize our attitude towards national interest, and that includes a special regard for global common interests. The new reading of national interest includes existence and survival as a pre-condition, desires of progress and development but also vital common interests. National interest neither can be ‘only’ self-centred nor ignoring the responsible dimension of sovereignty. In the light of good and effective global governance, national interest is a subjective, compatible, dynamic and plural concept composed of essential long-standing elements (related to the idea of survival or security, including the preservation of indigenous identity) and variable-beneficial elements (linked to the circumstantial and opportunistic political interpretations of prosperity). The very nature of national interest, namely the survival imperative along with the demand for prosperity imposes the need for compatibility as a means to practical feasibility. Compatibility of national interests and its contribution to the common good of Humankind, are no longer matters of morality but a pragmatic options.

In relation to China, bear in mind the following words of Yang Jiechi (2018)<sup>43</sup>:

‘China will take an active part in the reform of the global governance system with a commitment to equity and justice. A Chinese adage has it that “a just world should be pursued for the common good”. China maintains that global affairs should be run together by countries in the world, and that all people, irrespective of their nationality, social stratum, and walk of life, should be able to benefit from global governance. The global governance reform that China takes part in is not about overturning the current system and starting all over again. Instead, it is about improving the system so that it can better reflect the changing realities, increase the representation and say of developing countries, and bring greater democracy in international relations... China is a staunch supporter of the basic norms governing international relations underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. China supports the multilateral trading regime and a more open, inclusive, balanced economic globalization that delivers benefits to all. China stands firmly against trade and investment protectionism. On frontier areas such as cyberspace, deep sea, polar regions and outer space, countries should work together to develop new institutions and new rules, and build new platforms of win-win cooperation.’ The B&RI (and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) is an instrument of globalization advanced by China, open to the participation of all states. Sooner or later, it will make a decisive contribution to global multilateral governance in trade, finance, environment, international law, culture, security and political dialogue. If China is to lead global governance, it will have to include a positive contribution to the common good in its national interest. Josepha Laroche (2017, p. 41) has made an interesting observation and reminded us of the Machiavellian definition of politics: ‘the state of nature must constantly be curbed because it is primarily due to the desires of men and their insatiability, “because men will always turn out bad for you unless they have been made good by necessity”’. In relation to B&RI it is very clear in my mind that harming or neglecting global common interests, soon or later will prevent the Chinese national interest to prevail. To avoid that, China must encourage more dialogue and comprehensive scrutiny of the national interest of participating states.

In the context of multilateral global governance, we advocate as good practice for a responsible state a permanent concern for survival or preservation needs (including identity), a constructive attitude to seeking prosperity (including a circumstantial political reading of the concept) and a positive contribution to common interests. In other words, we call for responsible sovereignty not in the exclusive context of globalization where there is a sense of ‘patternization’, but with a community of shared future, which acknowledges and protects individual differences. The recognition of the existence of global common interests as part of the national interest, is a prerequisite for effective global governance. Responsible sovereignty is necessary for the efficient delivery of those global public goods that are relevant for the management of interdependence and the achievement of global sustainable development. The domestic conception of national interest tends to present a choice between ‘us’ or ‘them’. Global governance advances ‘togetherness’ in common interest as a rational third option, and the only capable of generating a certain degree of predictability. According to the Chinese adage, ‘a just world should be pursued for the common good’, in which the idea of common good is a dynamic concept open to all contributions. Consequently, the ultimate role of sovereign units as contributors to multilateral global governance is to understand that the national interest has to include a strictly domestic security vision in relation to its existence and identity, a shared and dynamic vision of prosperity, and a relevant-dynamic contribution to the common good. In global governance, national interest must advance responsible sovereignty as it recognizes that cooperation is the best way to promote our own national interest. Togetherness is the only option when choosing between our interests ('us') or their interest ('them'), and it all begins with modernizing our national attitude, towards the genuine and legitimate interests of others.

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<sup>42</sup> Conference participant and President of Institute of European Studies, Macau-China.

<sup>43</sup> Retrieved August 12, 2018, from [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/zyjh\\_665391/t1577242.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1577242.shtml)

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