

China's Authoritarian Ascendancy vs. US Democratic Dominance: A Comparative Analysis

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Article Information	Abstract
Received: Oct 14, 2025 Revised: Dec 26, 2025 Accepted: Dec 31, 2025	China's authoritarian ascendancy, characterized by state owned enterprises, technological development and dictatorial governance structure is contrary to US democratic dominance, enshrined in promotion of democratic norms and values, private owned enterprises, human rights and democratic governance structure. This paper is aimed to make a comparative analysis of both US and China's models by evaluating their domestic and foreign policies to identify the major areas of competition and cooperation such as global governance and institutional influence, economic statecraft and trade policies, soft power and cultural diplomacy, human rights, and democratic promotion. This study will examine the consequences of their competition on global security and conflict dynamics, democratic justice and human rights, international cooperation, multilateral control, the future of U.S.-China relations, and global governance. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the effectiveness of each approach in achieving its respective goals, taking into account regional and international norms, domestic political contexts and legitimacy. The paper will examine the complex dynamics of great power competition highlighting the challenges and opportunities produced by the interplay between authoritarian vs democratic dominance, in the light of neoliberalism. The research methodology of the paper is based on comparative analysis. Finally, this research offers recommendations for policymakers navigating the evolving global authoritarian vs democratic landscape to promote for a peaceful and stable order.
Keywords <i>US Democratic Dominance,</i> <i>Chinese authoritarian ascendancy,</i> <i>Neoliberalism,</i> <i>Global Governance,</i> <i>Human Rights</i>	

1. Introduction

The emergence of China as a global superpower has intensified scholarly debate regarding the comparative strengths and weaknesses of authoritarianism and democracy as governing systems. The longstanding dominance of the United States, grounded in liberal democracy and market capitalism, is confronted by the sustained challenge of China's one-party, state-led model. This study seeks to systematically evaluate which governance system, liberal democracy or state-led authoritarianism, produces more effective outcomes in international politics, economics, and society. Employing neoliberalism as an analytical framework, this research critically analyses the influence of each system on human rights, economic statecraft, and global governance.

The paper has explored the answers to these research questions:

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- (1) How China's authoritarian rise and the US's democratic dominance frame their approaches to global governance, economic statecraft, and soft power?
- (2) What are the consequences of the Sino-US competition for international cooperation, multilateralism, and global peace?

The study has used a comparative and analytical approach, analysing primary and secondary sources regarding specific areas of competition and cooperation, such as, economic statecraft, global governance and soft power.

The paper is divided into following sections:

The first section is about Theoretical Framework, the second one discusses Sino-US Divergence vis-a-vis Authoritarianism vs Democratic Dominance: A Comparative Debate, the third section is about the Governance Structure: China's Authoritarian vs. US Democratic, the fourth section is about Economic model: China's State-led vs. US Market-led/ Economic Statecraft and Trade Policies, the fifth one is about individual freedoms: China's Limited vs. US Protected Human Rights and Democratic Promotion, the sixth section covered the Global Influence: China's Expansionist vs. US Promotional Strategies, and the last section is about Opportunities and Challenges: Interplay between Authoritarian Ascendancy and Democratic Dominance and Conclusion.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Neoliberalism, a theory of international relations, has been applied to this paper as prime theoretical framework that is based on free market economy, open trade and investment, liberal financial institutions and economic interdependence. Furthermore, the cooperative and competitive dynamics that underlie the US-China interactions are the core concepts of neoliberalism.

The connection between two states is recognized as interdependence in the economy. Global financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF have significant impacts on how the US and China act and participate in international politics. There is a slight balance between collaboration and rivalry in China-US relations, particularly in the areas of commerce, security, and worldwide influence. The geopolitical dispute between the US and China is characterized by intricate strategic and political conundrums that defy explanation by a single theory. For the current research, the theoretical framework of neoliberalism provides a valuable insight and a deep understanding of the economic aspects of this geopolitical contention. China and the US are well-connected and integrated in global supply chains and China is the major hub for manufacturing to the US market. This deep integration according to Ma et al. (2021) is key to the global economy. Historically, China-US relations are driven by increasing trade and investment activities. The US is a great trading partner of China with potential investment in various manufacturing sectors. Brown (2021) explained that this relationship benefited both the US and China and because of China leveraging access to cutting-edge technologies and the US capitalizing on China's competitive manufacturing costs.

Neoliberalism has over surfaced the complex interplay between China's authoritarian ascendancy and the US democratic dominance while concentrating on the implications of this competition. China's economic model is based on state-led authoritarian control which is opposite to the neoliberal approach based on free market objectives with limited state intervention etc. China's model of authoritarian completely negates the privatization and liberalization of trade and investment policies. Contrary to this, the US model is based on liberal economy with a capitalist approach to enhance privatization and free financial and liberal economic industry.

The rivalry of Sino-US is further marked by their different approach to enhancing human rights and democratic ideals. American foreign policy is based on global democratic norms and individual freedom while China's foreign policy is based on authoritarian governance. Applying theoretical framework of neoliberalism on the contemporary Sino-US geopolitical competition explores the intricate divergence among economic integration, state intervention, and ideological differences. This theory proposes that economic connection between two rival states can strengthen stable political and

economic relations driven by geopolitical and economic factors.

2. China Authoritarianism vs US Democratic Dominance

China's centralized political system is characterized by limited political participation in national affairs. The Communist Party of China exercises complete control over the formulation of economic and political policies and decisions (Weaver, 2015). China's state is fully responsible for strict control, policy formulation, and implementation (Weaver, 2015). On the other hand, the United States has democratic governance structures with decentralized traits in addition to separation of powers, checks and balances, and indirect democracy. American citizens are equally involved in the decision-making process through balloting and adult universal suffrage. State-led Enterprises (SOEs) in China control the Chinese economy while playing an important role in critical strategic domains (Ferchen, 2013). Though China has incorporated the market dynamics, the State still regulates the key sectors.

There is limited political participation in China with strict control on freedom of expression and thought. China maintains strict surveillance and censorship on civil liberties (Chhabra, 2019). Contrary to China's political dissension, the US Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and thought, protection of civil and political rights, and independence of the judiciary. American Supreme Court maintains the rule of law to guarantee the protection of fundamental rights of citizens.

China uses BRI as its expansionist strategy to maintain its global role as a central power through trade and investment in international politics (Rolland, 2017). China's policy in the South China Sea is a clear indication of its hegemonic and expansionist designs. The US promotes its democratic dominance through its democratic norms, protection of human rights and values, and market-oriented economic model globally.

China's quest of preponderant influence in the Asia-Pacific region is motivated to counter the threats to its authoritarian rule by ideological contagion, external interference, and reputational damage. By establishing a sphere of influence that is dominated by autocratic states such as China, aims to insulate its authoritarian regime from the destabilizing effects of democratic diffusion, while reducing the likelihood of regional states cooperating with the United States to criticize China's human rights record. This strategy is supported by China's vision of a harmonious Asia, argued by Zhou and Esteban (2018) which seeks to reconfigure the regional order in a manner favourable to China's system of governance.

The emergence of authoritarian governance has been actively aided by China's strategic engagement in Central and Southeast Asia. China has bolstered authoritarian governments in Central Asia by offering military support, repressive skills, and other sorts of help. The danger of political instability has been lessened thanks to this assistance. Additionally, Beijing has pushed its form of administration in Southeast Asia which combines authoritarian principles with capitalist economics countries like Vietnam, Cambodia, and Myanmar. Brands (2018) argued that these countries are being given recommendations on how to implement policies like internet surveillance and strict regulations to suppress the opposition,

China considers that a world with more authoritarian governments will strengthen its authority and existence, and thus it helps authoritarian countries that are under threat. China hopes that other autocratic nations won't oppose its persecution of domestic opposition, protecting its image internationally. According to Brands (2018) that by cultivating relationships with other illiberal governments, China aims to create a favourable environment that promotes its interests and values.

Pautasso and Nogara (2023) mentioned that China's policies have been instrumental in supporting authoritarian regimes worldwide, effectively creating a network of like-minded governments. Through various strategies, China promotes illiberal values and weakens democratic influence. Economically, China provides no-strings-attached trade, investment, and loans to authoritarian regimes in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, allowing them to escape from the Western pressure on corruption, human rights, and governance issues. Militarily, China supplies weapons, intelligence, and military equipment to authoritarian governments in countries such as Angola,

Guinea, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Sudan, Venezuela, and Uzbekistan.

The United States is a liberal democracy with a government system based on free elections, separation of powers, and individual rights protection. The economy is driven by free market forces, with a focus on private enterprise and competition. The government has limited regulations, and even that is protected by an independent judiciary and free press. Moreover, the US liberal international order is based on a free-trade system, collective security, multilateral economic cooperation, and democracy. The last decade of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is taken as the golden years of the US in creating and maintaining a liberal global order. Its key achievements are the integration of major powers like Russia and China into key international institutions, European integration, NATO expansion, and a new wave of democratization as explained by Endaylalu (2022).

The post-Cold War international liberal order consists of three major pillars, liberal institutionalism, a complex web of interdependence, and spreading liberal democracy. Institutionalism is maintained through the US strengthening and creating liberal institutions with international membership, while the second pillar integrates various countries into the web of an open-world economy. The third pillar is promoting liberal democratic norms and values. These pillars are maintained and promoted through ordering mechanisms based on economic and politico-military tools (Endaylalu, 2022) as illustrated in Figure 1.

The liberal international order, established after World War II under the US ' hegemonic leadership, is a rule-based system centered on liberal democracy, collective security, human rights, multilateralism, and free trade. It includes institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the United Nations (UN), maintained by the US and Western powers as ordering mechanisms. The US has used these mechanisms to advance its interests (Endaylalu, 2022).

Liberal institutions indoctrinate illiberal actors about the inevitability, appropriateness, justice, and natural order of the prevailing order. They are normative instruments and mechanisms through which hegemony is expressed. Existing liberal institutions and norms are mirrors and byproducts of the US hegemonic power, reflecting its colour and acting as a priest of hegemony. Hegemonic fabricated institutions may serve as a baptizer and indoctrinator of hegemony (Endaylalu, 2022).



Source: Mazarr et al. (2016, p. 14).

Fig. 1. Elements and Engines of the Liberal International Order

3. Governance Structure: China’s Authoritarian vs. US Democratic Model

The United States' struggle to establish a global order reflective of its domestic values has been a longstanding imperative, driven by a pledge to promote democratic principles, human rights, and American geopolitical leadership. According to Brands (2018) this order-building project, articulated by ex-president of US George Bush in 2002, seeks to create a balance of power that favours human freedom, therefore, advancing liberal democratic values and US strategic interests.

Chinese officials believe that centralizing power serves as essential for projecting power across borders, protecting national security, and justifying internal persecution. Brands explains that they

pursue proactive foreign policy choices to revise global norms and expand military power. This strategy strengthens their authoritarian governance at domestic level while creating a conducive environment to legitimize their governance at international level. At present, global authoritarian leaders believe that there is interconnection among the international image, domestic stability and state power. Brands believes that building global image and reputation of a state as authoritarian enhances its capability to govern and control at domestic and regional domains.

China is actively working to establish an alternative institutional framework, driven by the objective of increasing authoritarian rule while rejecting Western influence. According to Halper (2010) these regimes seek to establish regional and international institutions to further their authoritarian goals. China's schemes, such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), have emerged as rivals to the current international system, which is led by the United States and its democratic partners. China's economic policy is to increase reliance on other countries while decreasing dependency on the United States of America. The rapid expansion of China's economy may endanger democratic standards and liberal principles. Because of China's expanding influence in finance, trade, and communications, Beijing may be able to impose penalties, gather intelligence, hinder economic flows, and force policy reforms. This shift highlights the need for the United States and its allies to coordinate policy responses that defend national interests while preserving liberal ideals.

4. Economic Statecraft: China's State-led vs. US Market-led Model

Chinese economic structure has been considered an important example of state engagement since state-owned enterprises control a number of significant industries, including energy, financial services, and heavy equipment production. The main leader of the CPC is Xi Jinping, the president of China, who still has complete control over politics. According to Li (2016) the CPC's Politburo and Central Committee make significant choices with minimal input from opposition parties or members of civil society. The Chinese government has significant control over the liberties that citizens, the media, and civil society enjoy. Gohdes (2024) the government uses a range of tactics, including speech censorship, surveillance, and repression, to uphold social harmony and eliminate opposition. Further, the economic elements of Chinese strategic thinking are complex, as stated by Dar and Javid (2025). Regarding officials from the United States, the complex structure of US-China interdependence presents is a major problem. Chhabra (2019) claims that China currently operates roughly 800 guiding funds totalling between \$500 billion and \$1 trillion, with a significant amount going toward innovative industries and technologies like robotics, machine learning, and green energy that are included in the Communist Party of China's Made in China 2025 initiative.

Moreover Wang (2021), concludes that China's integration into the liberal international order has disappointed liberal expectations of democratization. China has been consolidating authoritarian values, promoting "internet sovereignty" and challenging global norms to strengthen its rule. This phenomenon has led to concerns for the US and its allies about China's impact on undermining liberal norms. So, its main aim to Protect autocracy which is a top priority for China, and it is taking steps to shield itself from what it perceives as an aggressive liberal world. Brands (2018) says that a Chinese government guidebook stresses the need for vigilance and countermeasures against hostile international forces aiming to Westernize and split it. To counter potential threats, China is increasing its military capabilities, modernizing armed forces, and developing innovative counter strategies. China's counter-intervention strategy as Brands (2018) mentioned in his paper is designed to deter or defeat US intervention. However, since a direct military attack on its homelands will not happen, but its efforts are focused on the political, ideological, and economic fronts. This multi-faceted defence strategy of China aims to protect its authoritarian regime from apparent liberal fears, while also building its economic endurance to reduce dependence on the global economy and mitigate possible economic sanctions from the west.

5. Individual Freedoms: China's Limited vs. US Protected Human Rights and Democratic Promotion

Indeed, China has increased political repression, targeted civil society organizations, human rights supporters, and dissident voices. Kleptocracy (2025) describes it as strict limits on media, NGOs, and internet freedom combined with increased ideological indoctrination through state-run media and education. The Chinese government maintains continuous control over its people by using cutting-edge technologies include social credit systems and facial recognition. These mechanisms further stifle dissension and free expression by allowing the state to monitor and penalize people who are thought to be politically unreliable. Nathan (2015) believes that China's attempts to mitigate the impact of international news have resulted in more censorship and propaganda, supporting authoritarian regimes and condemning liberal ideals. Under Xi Jinping's leadership, China's human rights conditions have become worse and are at their worst level since 1989.

A study by Piccone (2018), during 2015, China has increased its repression of advocates for human rights by limiting their freedom of movement, authorizing surveillance, and terrorizing their families. As a result, activists like Cao Shunli and Liu Xiaobo have been killed. China's growing involvement in human rights at the U.N. is an important aspect of a plan to change world governance that began in 2012 with the accession of Xi Jinping, a change from Deng Xiaoping's covert policy (Gill, 2022). Piccone (2018) describes China's policy toward Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang as showing contempt for the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, as proven by official regulations that prohibit strange beards, veils, and state television. Under the president Xi Jinping, China has shifted its focus from traditional human rights norms to development and economic growth, redefining human rights to prioritize development and economic growth. The BRI strategy expanded China's economic reach and thus promoted its development model, without considering human rights or environmental concerns (Wang, 2019).

China is determined to change global governance its public image through its active participation in human rights issues at the U.N.O., usually at the expense of conventional human rights standards and principles. This includes silencing opposing views, restricting criticism of human rights records, and emphasizing economic growth over individual rights (Gill, 2022). A core challenge for US policymakers is to promote democratic institutions and democratic norms in traditional allies, especially in Europe and Asia, to prevent the dominance of hostile powers. Such dictatorship mindset, stated by Chhabra (2019) is inspired by an awareness that democracy is in peril and that US involvement is necessary to stop the descent and preserve the development of freedom and democracy.

Arnold Wolfers distinguished between possession goals and milieu goals. Possession goals the first one refer to valued national possessions, such as physical territory, whereas milieu goals the second one involve efforts to shape the nation's environment. Building on this concept, Stanley Hoffman argued that promoting and preserving values abroad, such as democracy and human rights, constitutes a milieu goal (Chhabra, 2019). Amidst intensifying geopolitical competition with authoritarian China, the promotion of democratic norms must become a paramount possession goal in the US grand strategy.

Biden claimed that the US was up against stiff competition with China and by our most serious competitor, China. He also said that if China intends to achieve hegemony, that is not going to happen on my watch. The US President targeted his Chinese counterpart, claiming that Xi Jinping does not have a democratic bone in his body. Xi Jinping, for his part, believes that attempts to erect walls or decouple run counter to the law of economics and market principle (Pautasso and Nogara, 2023). We must reject the Cold War and zero-sum mentality and oppose a new Cold War. Bossing others around or meddling in others' internal affairs will not get you any support. Biden and Xi claim they do not want a new Cold War, but the fact that they mention it is significant. And, in practice, they both seem committed to promoting it (Pautasso & Nogara, 2023).

6. Global Influence: China's Expansionist vs. US Promotional Strategies

The conflict between the US democratic dominance and China's authoritarian ascent includes both promoting and expanding tactics meant to strengthen each country's worldwide influence. Wang (2018) provides an important instance of an expansionist strategy i.e China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which intends to promote China as a key factor in international trade and construction of infrastructure.

By investing heavily in infrastructure projects across Asia, Europe, and Africa, China seeks to secure strategic trade routes and economic impact. China's military presence in the South China Sea reflects its expansionist approach, aiming to secure strategic maritime routes and project power in the region. BRI remains critical for President Xi to counter the American containment moves by reassuring its allies, telling the China story deterring other virtual rivals, and undermining American hegemony and influence. The BRI cooperation pursues development, aims at mutual benefits, and conveys a message of hope, President Xi says. American President Biden advises US allies that we should have, principally, a similar initiative, pulling from the democratic states, admitting the role that the BRI plays for China (Pautasso & Nogara, 2023).

China endorses state-led economic model as an alternative to Western capitalism, alluring to developing countries seeking rapid industrialization and economic growth. China engages in extensive diplomatic efforts with the west, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the AIIB, to promote its influence in regional and global governance. China promotes its cultural influence through Confucius Institutes and the global promotion of the Chinese language and culture, challenging Western cultural hegemony (Pan, 2013).

China used soft power as a strategic tool to enhance its global prestige and to achieve its national interests. Cultural diplomacy, strategic economic partnerships, technical advancements, and political and diplomatic engagement were used as strategic dynamics. Chinese President Xi said, while emphasizing the importance of soft power, they should increase China's soft power, give a good Chinese narrative, and better message through communication. Argued by Irfan (2024) the concept of soft power in International Relations was coined by Joseph, referring to the ability of a state to exert its influence on the actions and behaviours of other states by following persuasion as an alternative of coercion. The international power structure has converted from a traditional mode to soft power dynamics. Different states employ cultural, ideological, and institutional ways to attain their strategic goals. Five key areas of soft power were identified by Joseph, including economic interdependence, transnational actors, technology proliferation, explained by Pautasso and Nogara (2023).

China leveraged cultural diplomacy as a soft power tool by establishing Confucius Institutes and hosting cultural events. These institutes promoted the Chinese language and culture, promotion transnational exchanges. China also contributed in art festivals, film festivals, and sports exhibitions, fostering people-to-people connectivity and shaping its global image through education. A Beijing Television CCTV was established in 1958 and broadcast its international channel, CCTV-4, in 1992. President Xi Jinping urged the media to showcase China's role as a peace builder and use information age advancements to encourage the foreign public explained by Rahman (2019) vividly.

China used the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation to establish an efficient cooperation platform, create a closer partnership network, and balance the international governance system, signing a memorandum of understanding with 11 countries, cooperation documents with 9 organizations, and economic and trade agreements with 31 countries. China indorses the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through media, including a documentary series and the announcement of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Scholarship, which gives 10,000 scholarships annually to participating countries, promotion and strengthening soft power stance. American has traditionally promoted democratic values and a market-oriented economic model globally, using its cultural influence and diplomatic efforts to shape international norms (Robinson, 1996). Moreover, America promotes its innovation ecosystem and technological advancements as a model for economic growth and development, attracting talent and investment from the world.

The both states use a mix of promotional and expansionist strategies. The US keeps concentrating on promoting operations using its technology and cultural advantages, whereas China's expansionist objectives, which include the BRI are more prominent. These strategies have a significant impact on international trade, security, and government. As the two nations are trying to broaden their worldwide presence, there can be a chance that disputes and rivalry will increase in a variety of fields and spheres. In order to safeguard its power and influence, Washington has historically used expanding tactics, such as forming strategic alliances and a global military deployment. In an attempt to maintain its interests and influence, the United States maintains an important military presence over the world and forms alliances of strategic importance.

Moreover, the trade war between China and the United States, both countries are involved in cooperative mechanisms within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), World Trade Organization (WTO), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and G20. China-US collaboration is evident in various issues such as climate change, nuclear proliferation, environmental challenges, terrorism, Afghanistan, and North Korea. As China is the largest trading partner of America, US allies are reluctant to choose between engagement and strict containment with China. In contrast to this cooperative interaction, competition remains predominant in USA-China relations. The Biden administration was not only mobilizing and channelling organizations like NATO, G7, AUKUS, and Quad, which China perceives as an Asian NATO, but is also spearheading the establishment of an anti-China democratic front as described by Pautasso and Nogara (2023). To counter China's soft power and cultural diplomacy efforts, the United States has used various strategies, including promoting democratic values and human rights, strengthening alliances and partnerships with ally countries, supporting independent media and journalism, encouraging people-to-people exchanges and educational programs, and opposing Chinese disinformation and propaganda efforts.

The American initiatives include the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM) to promote independent media and journalism and to engage and connect people globally in support of civil rights and democracy, counter Chinese disinformation, encourage independent media, and support democratic institutions. Its key programs as mentioned by Malesky (2021) include Voice of America (VOA) to broadcast news and information in multiple languages, Radio Free Asia (RFA) to provide news and information to countries in East Asia, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty to broadcast news and information to countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

According to Davydov and Pee (2023) the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) supports democratic institutions and civil society. Its mission is to support freedom around the world by promoting democratic institutions, civil society, and human rights, and to counter Chinese authoritarian influence, support democratic movements, and promote human rights. Its key program includes grants provided to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society groups, and democratic institutions, and fellowships offered to democracy activists, scholars, and journalists (Nuruzzaman, 2016). Its mission is to promote mutual understanding and to foster people-to-people exchanges, promote cultural understanding, and support educational cooperation between the people of the United States and other countries. Its key programs include the Fulbright Scholarship to award students, scholars, and professionals for study, research, and teaching abroad. Fulbright Teaching Assistantships provide opportunities for young teachers to teach English abroad. The Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program brings scholars from abroad to the United States for research and teaching. The US Department of State's Global Engagement Center (GEC) (Weaver, 2015) to counter disinformation, counter foreign propaganda and disinformation, and promote US national security interests, counter Chinese disinformation, promote fact-based information, and support democratic institutions. Its key programs include Counter-Propaganda Programs aimed at countering Chinese, Russian, and other foreign propaganda efforts. Fact-based information Programs provide accurate and reliable information to counter disinformation. In an effort to encourage fact-based information, the Partnerships program works with NGOs, civil society organizations, and businesses in the private industry. These efforts aim to uphold American principles, thwart Chinese influence, and enhance ties with allies and neighbours.

7. Opportunities and Challenges vis-à-vis Authoritarian Ascendancy and Democratic Dominance

Especially in the backdrop of neoliberalism, the relationship between China's authoritarian rise and US democratic domination offers potentials as well as challenges. That is a realistic analysis. Accelerated growth, investment and trade opportunities, and China's integration into the international financial system have impacted the development of the economy of China. Its role in the global supply chain has helped to develop its economy. Chan and He (2019) believe that incorporating authoritarian China into the global supply chain can improve its effectiveness and lower prices, which will assist customers everywhere. Nevertheless, it could bring worries about labour rights and the impact on the environment.

The development of China as an authoritarian power further serves to provide an alternative system of governance in the multifaceted world, enhancing variation among the current political and economic systems and supporting greater creativity and competition in governance as different approaches evolve through tests and exercises. China's BRI is likely to expand China's market share and political-economic influence across Eurasia, Africa, and the Pacific, despite facing domestic challenges and potential shortfalls in achieving its economic and strategic objectives. China's authoritarian model maintains strict restrictions on political rights, assembly, the electorate, and association. It challenges the democratic fabric and persecution of ethnic minorities, such as Uyghurs, and the control of civil liberties in Hong Kong (Piccone, 2018). As prime examples, they undermine global norms on democracy and human rights, potentially leading to a decline in democratic governance worldwide. China's influence in promoting its authoritarian model has been observed in regions like Southeast Asia and Africa.

The combination of the neoliberal economic model with authoritarian governance can exacerbate social and economic inequality by offering favourable leverage to the elite, ignoring the general social welfare. It can contribute to the social unrest and political and economic instability in societies, as was the case in China's increased wealth disparities. State-controlled policies and decisions are generally not in consonance with market requirements, potentially leading to economic shocks, so the combination of an authoritarian economic model in the liberal global market can cause market volatility. The rivalry between Authoritarian and democratic regimes can lead to competition, destabilising the security architecture of the international order. China's assertive posture in the South China Sea and its military expansion in the region enhance geopolitical and strategic competition between the US and China as both countries claim their rights in Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZs) in the SCS (Zubair, 2023). Competing interests and ideological divergence between Authoritarian China and the Democratic US can increase the possibility of conflict in the region of their influence.

The US and its democratic allies face a daunting task in responding to China's strategic exploitation of the US's laissez-faire economic system (Muhammad & Jones, 2021). China has effectively compelled global businesses to make major compromises by using its huge market, putting immediate benefits ahead of possible conflicts with the Chinese Communist Party. This scenario poses an important question: will China retain its influence over American businesses, or will the US government regain control over them? Additionally, the result will have an important effect on Western culture.

Despite there are indicators of a growing awareness and realignment, the US is currently going through a crisis of trust in its democratic systems. More specifically, a group of Republicans have been advocating for industrial regulation, which is a major departure from their custom of laissez-faire. Despite the effects of the financial meltdown of 2008 and centuries of stagnating wages, Chhabra (2019) argued that this transition is mainly caused by the complexities offered by China, which could eventually give rise to a reconsideration of US financial regulation. The liberal international order has been divided over US's commitment to democracy and human rights. Critics believe that the US has used these democratic ideals as a tool of justification for intervening in the developing world, frequently in guise of promoting democracy and human rights. Critics are of the

view that by using slogan of democracy and human rights as justifications for governmental reform, the US is growing more hostile towards foreign civilizational entities. These may have antagonistic consequences, such as the continuing financial dispute in Damascus between both Washington and Moscow. The US has the capacity to both stabilize and undermine the liberal international order, as stated by Endaylalu (2022). In citing democracy and human rights as justifications for a change in leadership, the US has demonstrated animosity against alternative forms of governance. Libya and the ongoing financial disputes between the US and Russia in Syria serve as examples of the detrimental effects of this strategy, emphasizing US's dual capacity as a sustaining and weakening force in the liberal international order. Enhancing democratic resiliency in long-standing allies, particularly in Europe and Asia, wherever democratic decline is an imminent danger for US strategy. A study by Chhabra (2019) considering the volatile status of international democracy, American engagement is essential to preventing the decline of liberal ideas and barring hostile nations from influencing Eurasia's financial and technical centers.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

The relationship between China's authoritarian ascendancy and the United States' democratic dominance under neoliberalism presents complex opportunities and challenges. While economic growth and divergence of global governance offer potential benefits, ideological tensions, economic inequality, and security risks pose substantial challenges. The next phase in the relationship will depend on how authoritarian and democratic countries handle these situations in the prevailing international system. In the light of the rise of China to authoritarianism opposed to American democratic domination, both expansionist and promotional strategies are crucial for expanding global influence. Although United States depends more on marketing campaigns to maintain its dominance, China's expansionist approach aims to change the socioeconomic and political frameworks of the world. The ultimate outcome of this conflict will depend on how well both nations uphold their economic and ideological interests in the developing world system.

The conflict between the authoritarian ascendancy of China and the democratic dominance of the United States shows substantial differences in economic models, structures of government, individual liberties, and world dominance techniques. The free-market economy and democratically elected government of the United States contrast drastically with China's centralized economy and authoritarian power structure. Moreover, China pursues an expansionist strategy to enhance its global influence, the United States relies more on promotional efforts to maintain its leadership. These differences reflect fundamentally distinct visions for economic development and global dominance.

American strategy for the future must concentrate on safeguarding democracy and liberal principles from the growth of authoritarianism, especially in China. This requires viewing liberal ideals and democratic systems as possession goals deserving of sustained development and security. Strengthening democratic resilience in longstanding allies is a major problem for US strategy, especially in Europe and Asia, where decline in democracy is an important concern. American intervention is essential to preventing the degradation of liberal ideals and to avoiding the domination of Eurasia's financial and technological centers by opposing nations, given the dangerous state of world democracy. Some US projections of China might have overestimated China's economic challenges due to its rising energy dependence and high production costs.

Policymakers in the United States still have to take into account the possibility that China's authoritarian capitalism could continue to be sustainable and beneficial to other countries. Together with the unrest in the West, China's economic growth has made democratic capitalism less appealing and fostered the rise of authoritarians. Although other states could find it difficult to follow the Chinese Communist Party's specific style of state-backed investment and planning, Chinese success may nonetheless serve as an inspiration for governments with an authoritarian tendency.

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