



## CLASH OF IDENTITIES WHY CHINA AND THE EU ARE INHARMONIOUS IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

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### Abstract:

China and the EU should not be inharmonious in global governance if both sides grasp the true essence of the relations and our times. This paper argues that the real reason for China-EU disharmony is the clash of identities. China is trying to keep balance among four identities: i) developing country; ii) emerging power; iii) eastern civilization; and, iv) socialist state; while the EU also holds four identities in the eyes of Chinese: i) the biggest developed bloc, ii) post-modern model, iii) western civilization and iv) European capitalism. This entails four paradigms for China-EU relations: i) relations between the biggest developing country and the biggest developed bloc, ii) between an emerging power and post-modern model, iii) between eastern and western civilizations, and iv) between socialism and capitalism. The dynamic identities of both China and the EU lead to natural partnership for the two key players in constructing a multipolar world and ushering in effective multilateralism while at the same time result in clash of identities between each other. In the eyes of Europeans, it is difficult for China to hide behind the developing country curtain, being expected to play a more responsible role as an emerging global power, competing with and confusing the EU with its reserved and efficient way in dealing with global issues as eastern civilization and socialist state. And vice versa, in Chinese eyes, the EU is failing to represent the developed countries, the post-modern model, the western bloc, and capitalism. The mission for China and the EU is to bridge the identity and misperception gaps and seek new global consensus towards a harmonious world, while leaping forward on the back of common interests, common challenges and common values.

**Keywords:** China, the EU, Identity, Global governance, Harmonious World

### Resumen:

*China y la UE no deberían de mantener una falta de armonía en cuanto a la gobernanza mundial si ambas partes entienden la verdadera esencia de sus relaciones y de nuestra época. Este artículo afirma que la verdadera razón por la que las relaciones mutuas no son armónicas, es por un choque de identidades. China intenta mantener el equilibrio entre cuatro tipos de identidades: i) país en vías de desarrollo, ii) país emergente, iii) civilización oriental, y iv) estado socialista; mientras, la UE también está dotada de cuatro identidades a los ojos de China: i) el mayor bloque desarrollado, ii) un modelo posmoderno, iii) civilización occidental y iv) capitalismo europeo. Ello implica que hay cuatro paradigmas en las relaciones China-UE: i) relaciones entre el mayor país en desarrollo y el mayor bloque desarrollado, ii) entre un poder emergente y un modelo posmoderno, iii) entre la civilización occidental y la civilización oriental y iv) entre socialismo y capitalismo. Las identidades dinámicas tanto de China como de la UE conducen hacia una asociación natural para dos actores clave para la construcción de un mundo multipolar y la entrada en un multilateralismo efectivo, mientras que al mismo tiempo tiene lugar un choque de identidades. En los ojos de los europeos, es difícil para China mantenerse detrás del velo del país en desarrollo, esperándose de él un papel más responsable como un poder global emergente, a la par que compite con y confunde a la UE con su modelo reservado y eficiente de lidiar con los problemas globales como país oriental y estado socialista. Para China igualmente, la UE está fracasando a la hora de presentarse simultáneamente como país desarrollado, modelo posmoderno, bloque occidental y país capitalismo. La misión para China y la UE es superar las diferencias de identidad y percepción y perseguir un nuevo consenso global hacia un mundo armónico, al mismo tiempo que se progresa sobre la base de los intereses comunes, desafíos comunes y valores comunes.*

**Keywords:** China, la UE, identidad, gobernanza global, mundo armónico.

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## 1. Introduction

Traditionally speaking, China-US relations cannot be worse and China-EU relations cannot be better since the former has overlapping geopolitical interests while the latter has not. But even China and the EU are not cooperating well in Africa where they have increasingly overlapping geopolitical interests. This reminds us that to grasp the true essence of China-EU relations, we should go beyond traditional realist or liberalist perspectives.

As both an old and new country, China shares more similarities with the EU than with the US. We can draw such conclusion either from the shared diverse cultures, hierarchical tradition and secular society of China and the EU, or from American exceptionalism based on Protestantism and its anti-communism gene. China is an old civilization but a new player in world affairs, so is the EU. China is a culture community instead of a nation-state,<sup>2</sup> so is the EU. China enjoys dynamic and diverse identities, so does the EU, which causes both clashes and collaborations between China and the EU.

## 2. China's Dynamic Identities in Today's World

Liang Qichao, a great scholar at the end of the Qing Dynasty, has classified Chinese history as "China's China", "Asia's China" and "the World's China" which also embodied China's three identities.<sup>3</sup> In today's world, "China's China" refers to socialism with Chinese characteristics.<sup>4</sup> "Asia's China" refers to eastern civilization (East Asian civilization, the same below). "The World's China" refers to developing country and emerging power.

China lost its traditional identity since the Opium War (I: 1840-42, II: 1856-60) and has witnessed the long march to seek its new identity. The traditional Chinese world outlook "All-under-heaven"<sup>5</sup> ("China's China", in which China equals the world) collapsed fundamentally when China lost the war with Japan in 1895. Not until 1912, when the Republic of China was founded as the first democratic nation in Asia, did China finally accept the new identity of "Asia's China" and partly "the world's China",<sup>6</sup> with the integration of the western system based on sovereignty and nation-state, while combining with traditional the Chinese political structure.<sup>7</sup> When the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949,

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<sup>2</sup> China has 56 nations which is not the typical nation-state. In fact, although the development of nations in China has a long history, it was usually called race, tribe, etc., but not "nation". The word "nation" was translated from the Japanese language. Wang Tao, a thinker in the late Qing Dynasty, first introduced the word "nation" in his article "Foreign Affairs is about Learning Others' Advantages" in 1882. So is nationalism, nation-state, sovereignty, territory, etc. See Wang, Yiwei: "Seeking Chinese New Identity: the Myth of Chinese Nationalism", *World Economy and Politics*, no. 2 (2006).

<sup>3</sup> Liang, Qichao: "Introduction to Chinese History", *Yinbinshi Heji* (Complete Works of Liang Qichao), Beijing, Beijing Press, vol.1, no.6 (1901), pp.11-12.

<sup>4</sup> Socialism with Chinese characteristics is something that combines the basic principles of scientific socialism with the facts of building socialism unique to China. Socialism is the common rule and essential feature of the practice, while Chinese characteristics are what the basic principles of socialism really embody in China. See: "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics", *People's Daily*, 30 September 2007, at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90002/92169/92211/6275043.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Zhao, Tingyang: "The Concept of All-under-heaven: A Semantic and Historical Introduction", at <http://transculturajura.uni-sb.de/publications/zhao-le%20robert1.doc>.

<sup>6</sup> For instance, one of the two Chinese Communist Party founding fathers Chen Duxiu only knew in his twenties that China is just "one country" in the world

<sup>7</sup> The founding father of Republic of China, Dr. Sun Yat-sen developed Abraham Lincoln's thought "of the people, by the people and for the people" into "the Three Principles of the People" (Nationalism, Democracy, the



China got a new identity: socialist state. At the same time, China identified itself as the big brother of the third world during Mao's era. After China began to open and reform, China has been an emerging power by integrating with Asia and the world through embracing regionalization and globalization, through which Chinese identities as "Asia's China" and "the world's China" have fully come into being.<sup>8</sup>

Until now, the relations between China and the world have reached the stage of "the World's China" vs. "China's World", i.e., between "China in the world" and "Chinese version of the world", which was indicated by the "peaceful rise/peace development" strategy and "harmonious world" outlook.<sup>9</sup> With the rise of economic China, political China follows and cultural China comes thereafter. And today's Chinese aggressive diplomacy and public opinions indicates that the China's focus has shifted more and more from "the world's China" to "China's world".

No doubt, "the world's China", i.e. China's identities as a developing country and emerging power, are more discussed and recognized in today's world. "China's China" and "Asia's China" are working under domestic constrains in shaping China's international behaviour.

Of course, China's identity is changing, not just because China is undertaking a transition during the open and reform period, but partly because the world's identity is also changing, i.e., a new world identity is shaping up. Since World War II, a new international order has been emerging. The Western/American version of globalization is giving way to diverse globalizations. China cannot just rely on it and should adjust itself to match the world future. The world should also adjust itself to match the rise of the emerging powers.

Then, how does one make China's four identities into harmonious co-existence? Chinese historian Zhang Baijia discovered it famously in his article "Changing the World through Changing Itself" by describing the mutual impact between China and the world as "the world impacts China through China's self-changing".<sup>10</sup> Based on such logic, one can understand why China was a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, while India was fully colonized in the 19th century, and why the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, but China is still keeping its own political system. To cultivate China as another India or expect China will follow the step of Soviet Union is an illusion, in James Mann's word "the China Fantasy".<sup>11</sup>

Also, because of that, China always claims that foreign policy is the extension of domestic politics and highlights the guideline of non-interference in the internal affairs of others, considering it as one of the five principles of peaceful co-existence. Chinese low-

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People's Livelihood) and John Locke's thought "the Separation of The Three Powers (executive, legislative and judicial)" into "the Five Power Constitution" (five branches of government, named *Yuan*: Executive *Yuan*, Legislative *Yuan*, Judicial *Yuan*, Examination *Yuan*, and Control *Yuan*).

<sup>8</sup> China joined the WTO in 2001, which usually was considered as the milestone that China got its full membership as "the world's China".

<sup>9</sup> As the "harmonious world" outlook, see: Hu, Jintao: "Making Great Efforts to Build a Harmonious World with Long-lasting Peace and Common Prosperity", Speech, *United Nations (UN), Summit 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*, New York (16 September 2005), available at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/zyjh/t212614.htm>; Hu, Jintao: "Unite as One and Work for a Bright Future", Statement, *United Nations (UN), General Debate of the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly*, New York (23 September 2009), at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t606276.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> Zhang, Baijia: "Gaibian Ziji Yingxiang Shijie" [Changing Thy Self, Influencing Thy World], *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue [Social Sciences in China]*, no. 1 (2002), pp. 4-19.

<sup>11</sup> Mann, James (2007): *The China Fantasy: How Our Leaders Explain Away Chinese Repression*, New York, Viking Adult, pp. 1- 144.



profile diplomacy “*tao guang yang hui*” can also be grasped in such logic, which makes Chinese government always focusing on domestic politics first. China hesitated to take diplomatic initiatives in former times.

Does the logic change now? Has China reached the stage of “Changing Itself through Changing the World”? Partly yes. After all, the world is on the eve of dramatic changes to cope with global challenges and to meet the demand of the rise of emerging powers. But such changes are far behind China’s changes. Whatever China has changed, some countries are still unsatisfied with a quite new but not totally new China.

Partly no. We should not exaggerate or over-explain China’s rise which is mainly benefiting from globalization. The rising Chinese power is not just an independent power which China can use freely but a structural power depending on the world. And most importantly, China is still a developing country. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao often uses such comparison with multiplication-division:

As premier of China, my responsibility is heavy, the job is demanding, and there is endless work to do. 1.3 billion is a very big number. So if we use multiplication, any small problem multiplied by 1.3 billion will end up being a very big problem. For a very big aggregate divided by 1.3 billion, it will come to a very tiny figure. This is something that is quite difficult for foreign visitors to understand and appreciate.<sup>12</sup>

To keep the balance between “China’s world” and “the world’s China”, the future is determined by the interaction between China and the world, which will be tested by China-EU clash of identities.

### **3. The EU’s Identity Crisis or Identity Dilemma?**

Different with China’s enduring dynamic identities, “Europe, as a whole, is going through a clear identity crisis at both national and individual levels.”<sup>13</sup> As George Weigel has pointed out,

Europe, and especially Western Europe, is in the midst of a crisis of civilization morale. The most dramatic manifestation of that crisis is not to be found in Europe’s fondness for governmental bureaucracy or its devotion to fiscally shaky health care schemes and pension plans, in Europe’s lagging economic productivity or in the appeasement mentality that some European leaders display toward Islamist terrorism. No, the most dramatic manifestation of Europe’s crisis of civilization morale is the brute fact that Europe is depopulating itself.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “Interview With Wen Jiabao: A Complete Transcript From Chinese Premier’s Meeting”, *The Washington Post*, 21 November 2003, at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A6641-2003Nov22&notFound=true>.

<sup>13</sup> Radu, Michael (2010): *Europe’s Ghost. Tolerance, Jihadism, and the Crisis of the West*, New York, Encounter Books.

<sup>14</sup> Weigel, George: “Is Europe Dying? Notes on a Crisis of Civilization Morale”, *AEI Online* (March 2005), at <http://www.aei.org/outlook/22139>.



The European sovereign debt crisis puts the retirement age as a hot controversial issue among the EU member states, which not only reveals the above European civilization problem as “European society has lost its moral and cultural bearings” but also reveals the European identity crisis as post-modern model and European capitalism. The post-modern European economy cannot avoid the pitfall of modern economic crisis but endures longer than other modern countries.

Besides the identity crisis, the EU is facing identity dilemmas also. The EU’s identity in general can be described as a normative power. However, the EU’s such self-identification draws both identity advantages and disadvantages.

In European’s eyes, the EU is a *sui generis* normative power which distinguishes it from others and from history as discovered by Ian Manners:

[...] the EU is a normative power: it changes the norms, standards and prescriptions of world politics away from the bounded expectations of state-centricity. However, it is one thing to say that the EU *is* a normative power by virtue of its hybrid polity consisting of supranational and international forms of governance; it is another to argue that the EU *acts* in a normative (i.e. ethically good) way.<sup>15</sup>

Ian Manners also outlined ‘sustainable peace’ as a prime normative principle of the EU. However, an international survey seriously questions the EU’s role in the world:

Europe should be a force for stability in the world. But an EU without an effective foreign policy mechanism, without the ability to shoulder its share of the military burden associated with keeping the world safe, with a faltering Euro and with too many new members is a big void where the world needs strength. Sometimes the greatest threat comes from those who could take action to preserve stability but who do not.<sup>16</sup>

In today’s world, mutual learning and tolerance among different civilizations is an inexhaustible source of strength for social progress. The European Union is a rising power on a declining continent, which reveals the dilemmas of representativeness, integration and words & deeds concerning the EU’s identification as a normative power.<sup>17</sup>

Besides normative power, Robert Cooper inclined to identify the EU as “post-modern” model comparing with other countries still living in “modern stage” like China or “pre-modern” stage like Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup> However, other countries are not living in Europe’s history.

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<sup>15</sup> Manners, Ian: “The Normative Ethics of the European Union”, *International Affairs*, vol. 84, no.1, (2008), p. 65.

<sup>16</sup> Rothkopf, David: “The world’s 10 most dangerous countries”, *Foreign Policy* (07 August 2009).

<sup>17</sup> See Wang, Yiwei: “The Identity Dilemmas of EU Normative Power: Observations from Chinese Traditional Culture”, chapter 6, in Gerrits, André (ed.), “Normative Power Europe in Global Politics”, Clingendael, *European Papers* (December 2009), at [http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2009/20091200\\_cesp\\_paper\\_gerrits.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2009/20091200_cesp_paper_gerrits.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Cooper, Robert (2000): “Post-Modern State and the World Order”, Demos.



Such argument is full of European superiority and ‘centralism’, with strong mentality of linear evolution and with the pitfall of dichotomy.<sup>19</sup>

Even though with post-national is meant a political form of identity that is founded on the recognition of constitutionally entrenched democratic values and human rights, which is very different with Chinese culture. Europe’s post-modern identity to its essence, is very similar to Chinese traditional identity of the Four Yi:

The Yi [of the east], Man [of the south], Rong [of the west], and Dí [of the north] are together called the Four Yi. According to the system of nine zones, the land they inhabit is in the strategic zone and the desolate zone. The [deeper] meaning of [the language used in] the Chunqiu is to regard Zhuxia as compatriots and Yi-Di as foreigners. Because their languages are not intelligible to us, their gifts and trade goods are different, their laws and customs are strange, and their racial type is abnormal, they therefore live outside the furthest frontier, beyond the mountains and the Yellow River, in mountainous and inaccessible valleys, their soil separated from that of Zhongguo. We do not invade them or impose our taxes and corvée on them, nor do we require them to observe our calendar. Hence it is said, “The Son of Heaven who knows the Way defends his realm from the Four Yi.”<sup>20</sup>

This is the reason that when the EU inclines to identify China as modern country while the EU has reached the post-modern stage, China however considers Europe’s universalism as today’s “All-under-heaven” which China gave up a century ago. In this regard, the EU is still living in Chinese history also.

#### **4. Clash of Identities between China and the EU**

Similar to China, the EU holds four identities in the eyes of Chinese: the biggest developed bloc, post-modern model, western civilization, and European capitalism. Then, according to the multiplication principle, there should be  $4 \times 4 = 16$  combinations for China-EU relations.

However, only reciprocal combinations make sense, in other words, there are four kinds of clash of identities for China-EU relations:

1. Socialism vs capitalism: China’s China vs. EU’s EU, i.e., China still feels the ideological gap with the EU. Some countries of Eastern Europe even consider China as communist country like Soviet Union, which brings with less flexible position on democracy or human rights for the EU towards China. However, China highlights people’s heart in socialism, i.e., the essence and goal of democracy and human rights, not just the means and procedures that European green-liberal party particularly claims.
2. Eastern civilization vs. western civilization: Asia’s China vs Europe’s EU, i.e., China

<sup>19</sup> Wang, “The Identity Dilemmas...”, *op.cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Jiang Tong(江通), *Xironglun* (《西戎論》), in 299 (Xi Jin Dynasty).



still feels the cultural gap with the EU. China is probably the only ancient civilization that has not been colonized by Europe, which leads to today's confrontation over universalism. China considers European's universalism as Europeanism especially when "the silent majority" wakes up with the rise of the middle class in BRICs countries.

3. Developing country vs. developed countries bloc: The World's China I vs. the world's EU I, which invites controversial debate over China's international responsibility. China defines itself as a developing country since China's per capital GDP ranks only 103 in the world; while Europeans consider it as China's irresponsible to hide behind the curtain of a developing bloc.

4. Emerging power vs. post-modern model: The World's China II vs. the world's EU II, which causes a possible zero-sum game between China and the EU in the eyes of conservative Europeans. The World Bank recent increased sharply China's weight at the cost of the Europe's and Japan's gave the evidence for such mentality. Different with European image of post-modern model as surpassing the modern stage, Chinese realists simply treat Europe as defensive or declining power

The clash of identities between China and the EU can be traced back to the geopolitics of emotions:

In general terms, the Asian world today is characterized especially by hope, the Arab-Islamic world by humiliation and the western world by fear... fear is the absence of confidence; hope is the expression of confidence; humiliation is the loss of hope that results from wounded confidence... What may appear initially to be a reductive and stereotypical vision turns out to be a clear-sighted plea for understanding 'the Other' in the age of globalization.<sup>21</sup>

It would be much more productive if the EU accepted the China model as an alternative to its own, considering China as a different civilization, and not attempting to tailor it according to modern EU mentality, including such issues as human rights and democracy. As one of the hottest global issue, climate change issue reveals these lessons more clearly.

## **5. Case Study: Why China and the EU are Inharmonious in Coing with Climate Change**

Identity follows responsibility and responsibility reflects identity. Multilateral and dynamic identities draw multilateral and dynamic responsibilities. Both China and the EU should have their appropriate responsibilities following their respective four identities.

Let's take climate change as an example. China's position on climate change should keep in balance the following four dimensions to match China's four identities:

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<sup>21</sup> Moisi, Dominique (2009): *The Geopolitics of Emotion: How Cultures of Fear Humiliation and Hope are Reshaping the World*, New York, Doubleday.



- **China's China:** The basic human rights for Chinese are the right of living and developing. Facing the global climate change, to feed up 1.3 billion people and to provide the comfortable environment for them are the two basic responsibilities for Chinese government. In doing so, Chinese emission rights have not been used up comparing with other countries. Chinese per person emission is less than one third of that of the developed countries.

- **Asia's China:** Asian countries are the most to suffer from climate change because of its population density. As the biggest country in Asia and the most populous country in the world, China will an increasingly leading role in building up an Asian regional mechanism to cope with climate change on the base of the 10+1 and 10+3 frameworks.

- **World's China:**

- 1) **Developing country:** as a P-5 member of the UN Security Council representing the developing countries, China should protect their rights by highlighting the principle of "common but differentiated responsibility" under the Kyoto Protocol, preserving sovereignty by not accepting international inspection or deep quantified emission cuts, but volunteering to reduce emissions in their own ways besides the survival emissions. For developing countries, development is the key.

- 2) **Emerging power:** China is one of the emerging powers in the process of rapid development. One of the third Chinese emissions of greenhouse gas is international transferring emissions. In other words, China exports products but inputs pollution at the same time. "Made in China" is not just made for Chinese people, but is largely consumed by foreigners especially the westerns without paying a tax on international transferring emissions.

As a special developing country and emerging power, China plays a leading role in the developing world and among emerging powers, in coping with climate change beyond its national interests. Climate change is not just a challenge but also an opportunity to change the Chinese development model. Having realized this, even the Chinese per person emission level is quite low, but considering the trends of climate change and wooing to win the future international competitions advantages, China is taking full consideration of its total emissions level and voluntarily cutting its greenhouse gas emissions intensity per unit of GDP by 40-45% below 2005 levels by 2020.

Of course, the order and level for the above identities/responsibilities are changing with time, but the identity of "China's China" is always the basic and the core.

At the same time, the EU plays a leading role in climate change as the biggest developed bloc, post-modern model, western civilization, and European capitalism.

Then, the climate change issue entails four paradigms for China-EU relations:

1. Relations between the biggest developing country and the biggest developed bloc, which means that China-EU relations over climate change leads to a convergence of the main contradictions between the two blocs, which holds the key for negotiation.





2. Relations between an emerging power and post-modern model, which result in potential a zero-sum game between China and the EU over the contemporary and historic responsibilities for climate change.
3. Relations between eastern and western civilizations, which lead to the different approaches in dealing with climate change: adaptation or mitigation?
4. Relations between socialism and capitalism, which brings together different mentalities in negotiating: justice or efficiency?

China plays the key role in bridging the gap between the developing world and developed world and between emerging powers and developed countries in particular. So, to deal with China in climate change and other issues is to deal with the developing world and BASIC (emerging powers) countries. The EU disappointed China again in the Copenhagen climate change conference by not only missing the opportunity to cooperate with China in global governance, but even tended to isolate China and blamed China for arrogance after failing to do so.<sup>22</sup>

Again, the Copenhagen climate change conference revealed the current difficulties in China-EU relations which can be traced back to China's identity dilemma in the eyes of Europeans: difficult to hide behind the developing country curtain, and expected to show more responsibly as an emerging global power; confusion and competition from China's reserved and efficient way in dealing with global issues as an eastern civilization and socialist state; and conversely, the EU's identity dilemmas in Chinese eyes: failing to represent the developed countries, the post-modern model, the western bloc, and capitalism, while keeping its self-identity

China's complex identities and stage of development indicates that the soft conflict with the EU is unavoidable over international responsibilities in global affairs. However, it will be part of the relations between China and the EU during the transition period. China's identities will shift from history-oriented, present-oriented to future-oriented sooner or later. As a consequence, China will share more and more common understandings and responsibilities with the EU on global affairs. The EU should be patient to wait for a new China, at the same time, should give up the illusion of westernizing China and getting out from the anxiety of being Chinanized.<sup>23</sup> Harmonious co-existence and intensive cooperation between China and the EU will not only offer more hopes for global security, but also will reduce global insecurity.

The climate change issue reminds us again that China-EU relations should going beyond the bilateral dimension and reach the true essence of the relations of the above four paradigms. The difficulties and complexities also mean a great hope for a relationship that pursues a mission for humanity.

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<sup>22</sup> "Chinese premier responds to "arrogance" charge", *Xinhua*, 14 March 2010, at [http://english.gov.cn/2010-03/14/content\\_1555804.htm](http://english.gov.cn/2010-03/14/content_1555804.htm).

<sup>23</sup> For instance, the British scholar and journalist Martin Jacques warns the West that the world will be Chinanized not Westernized any more in the coming future, which is the revival of "Clash of Civilizations" by other means, see: Jacques, Martin (2009): *When China Rules The World: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World*, London, New Statesman.



As the UK House of Lords, European Union Committee - Seventh Report argued after three months introspection:

As was shown at the Copenhagen climate change conference in 2009, the balance of global power is moving strongly eastwards and southwards. Without resolving its relationship with China, the EU cannot achieve its aims. The role which China and the EU can play in shaping 21st century global affairs will be crucial to solving the world's problems.<sup>24</sup>

## **6. Looking Ahead: Build a Harmonious World Starting From China-EU Harmony**

Identity not only means self-identification but also means being identified by others. The mission for China and the EU is to bridge the identity and perception gaps.

Around 2,500 years ago, Confucius argued □ “The gentleman aims at harmony, and not at uniformity. The mean man aims at uniformity and not at harmony.” How can China and the EU handle the new paradigm of the relationship to avoid the “mean man” outcome? This is a true challenge for the future leaders both in China and in the EU.

Given the diverse and dynamic identities, both China and the European Union share ambitions to shape the international order according to their own values. The only way to avoid a clash of ideas and identities is to look for, and to stress, the elements of agreement and consensus. Surpassing domestic and ideological disputes, China and Europe share more and more common international values, such as effective multilateralism and global governance. But even in the domestic field, China shares common social values with Europe, such as secularity in the societal sphere and cultural diversity.

With four identities for both, China and the EU are the most important pillars as the world hardware and software (cultural “G2”) not only in traditional international regime such as UN security council but also the new platform such as G20, to bride the gaps between developing countries and developed countries, to get the win-win result for emerging powers and the developed world, to create a harmonious relations for eastern civilization and western civilization and to reach the same goal by different means through the coordination between socialism with Chinese characteristics (China model) and European capitalism (EU model). In one word, the dynamic identities of both China and the EU lead to natural partnership for the two key players in constructing a multipolar world and ushering in effective multilateralism; while at the same time surpassing the clash of identities in dealing with global challenges. This is the mission for both China and the EU, which are the possible only two consistent and ancient civilizations with dynamic identities in the world.

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<sup>24</sup> “Stars and Dragons: The EU and China”, Seventh Report 2009-10, *UK House of Lords, European Union Committee* (23 March 2010), at <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/ld200910/ldselect/ldecom/76/76i.pdf>.



In the times of uncertainty, China–EU relations needs a leap forward, from common interests and common challenges to common values (consensus) and to work on a new global consensus and to build a harmonious world with long-lasting peace and common prosperity.