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**Chinese Behaviour in the International
Labour Organization – Status Quo or
Revisionist Actor?**

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Abstract

What is Chinese behaviour like in the International Labour Organization (ILO) – is China a Status Quo or a Revisionist Actor? Despite the prominence of the issue of China's rise in international relations studies, little research has been published on China's behaviour in international organizations in other realms than the economic. This thesis, therefore, seeks the answer to the posed question. Chinese statements are examined concerning forced and child labour, as well as other distinct themes, their structure and a potential underlying strategy. The findings are retrieved from an analysis of Chinese statements in sittings of ILO organs and checked against information provided in ILO reports to detect discrepancies. A major finding is that the overall behaviour of China in the ILO can be categorized as reform-minded status quo, even though there are some factors which could be interpreted as revisionist tendencies. Due to this categorization, a continued peaceful rise of China is considered to be possible.

Keywords

China, International Organizations, Status Quo, Revisionist, International Labour Organization, Behaviour

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Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague, 19.05.2017

Julia Köppen

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light green background. The signature reads "J. Köppen" in a cursive script. The letter "J" is large and loops around, followed by a period and the name "Köppen".

Acknowledgments

I am especially grateful to my family and friends who supported me incredibly much and made sure that I kept the goal in mind.

Institute of Political Studies
Master thesis proposal:
China as an Actor in International Organizations -a Case Study on the
International Labour Organization (ILO)

1. Introduction to the Topic and Motivation

China's economic rise offers an impressive picture. By now, China has the largest GDP in the world if measured in PPP and the second largest if measured based on current prices. It also holds the largest share of foreign exchange reserves and attracts high rates of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). As this rise has been so remarkable, the discussion is no longer only about material strength. China's rise and its implications for the global order are amongst the most discussed topics of current IR. It is debated whether China will continue its rise peacefully or not and whether it intends to be a status quo power benefiting from the current system or a revisionist power aiming to destroy the current system and set up its own one, benefitting its interests even more. Potential answer to these questions differ considerably from each other.

Some scholars such as Mearsheimer (2006, 2010) are convinced that China cannot rise peacefully. As differences in terms of power are decreasing between the U.S. and China, he expects an intense security competition with considerable potential for war. This will be intensified as most of China's neighbours will join the US to restrict China. Furthermore, he does not only believe that China will rise forcefully, but also expects the US to act aggressively. Mearsheimer acknowledges that it is hard to predict the future, but based on his realist convictions, he believes that China will act aggressively as soon as it has the capacity to do so. To him there is "no amount of good will [which] can ameliorate the intense security competition that sets in when an aspiring hegemon appears in Eurasia" (Mearsheimer, 2010, p.396). In contrast, scholars such as Johnston (2003) and Shambaugh (2005) highlight that China got more and more active and engaged in International Organizations and therefore believe that China will rise peaceful and potentially even within the existing order. Shambaugh is even convinced that most regional countries no longer consider Beijing as a threat and some are even looking to it for regional leadership and that a change of the system does not have to be a zero-sum game. China's rise does not necessarily mean US decline.

As illustrated in this short introduction to the overall topic, there is a wide range of possibilities. The research proposed here seeks to add to the literature on China and

International Organizations and its role in the international system by conducting an in-depth analysis of China's behaviour within the International Labour Organization. The behaviour is planned to be examined in regard to the Child Labour Convention and the Forced Labour Convention. Concretely, it seeks to answer the question of how China behaves in the ILO as an example of a classical IO. Is it status quo oriented or rather revisionist? The ILO is a very interesting choice as it is not an economic institution such as the WTO which have been extensively covered but focuses on Labour Rights which belong to the field of Human Rights and have not been covered much yet.

2. Research Question

How does China behave in the International Labour Organization – is it a Status Quo or Revisionist Actor?

3. Concepts and Theory

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The proposed research will be conducted within the framework of a rationalist analysis focusing on China's strive for power and the fulfilment of its interest within the ILO, in the broader context of economic liberalism. Rationalist behaviour is based on the assumption of goal oriented behaviour, thus power and interest driven. Economic liberalism provides a fitting context for such an analysis.

According to Gilpin (1987), "Liberalism may, in fact, be defined as a doctrine and set of principles for organizing and managing a market economy in order to achieve maximum efficiency, economic growth, and individual welfare" (p.27). Thus, the goal is clear: the maximization of power and the fulfilment of interest through economic efficiency and economic growth. Institutions are created to serve these purposes. Actors act based on cost/benefit or means/end calculations, that is, rationalist behaviour. This means objectives are pursued until the cost for achieving that objective are equal to the benefits gained from it. In addition, liberal economists believe in progress which is usually characterized by an increase in wealth per capita. In their view, a functioning economy grows linear, gradual and continuous. Another important aspect to mention here is that there is no assumed link between the growth of an economy and political developments such as war. Rather, liberals are convinced that economic interdependence and its benefits contribute to peace and bring peoples together rather than separate them. They further believe liberal economies to positively affect

international politics and thus contribute to the stable status quo (Gilpin, 1987).

3.2 Concepts: International Organizations, ILO, Status Quo and Revisionist Actors

As the ILO was chosen as an example of a classical IO, the concept of IOs has to be explained for reasons of clarification. More specifically, the ILO will be introduced. To classify China's behaviour, the options of status quo and revisionist actor are given, thus, they will also be explained.

4. Hypothesis

Based on the theoretical framework, it is hypothesized that China is a rationalist actor within the ILO, therefore, it can be considered a status quo rather than revisionist actor. Cost/benefits calculations have been made and made Chinese leaders realize that the ILO framework benefits them in maximizing their interests as well as power. It is further assumed that China behaves this way to secure advantages. As China is a step ahead of India in terms of its economy, it might be possible that Chinese leaders see the possibility to use the ILO conventions to extend China's lead and impose constraints on India's development.

Furthermore, based on the liberal stipulation that economic interdependence contributes to a peaceful environment, it is claimed that China's rise within the system will continue to be peaceful even though it might strive to maximize its power and interests and to enhance its positions.

5. Operationalization and Data

The proposed research will provide an in-depth case study investigating the way China behaves within the International Labour Organization (ILO) as an example of a classical International Organization (IO). There are several reasons why the ILO was chosen. The area covered by the actions of the ILO has so far not attracted much attention by scholars even though it is closely related to economics, an area which has been widely covered. As it aims to promote worker's rights and decent work for all men and women is an interesting case study for several reasons: First, China is labour-rich country and a lot of its economic success is based on the abundance of cheap labour. Second, the growing gap between rich and poor and the low labour standards are considered to become a major obstacle for China's growth to continue if workers rise up and cause

turmoil and weaken the country from the inside. This is why the author believes that labour rights and standards should be of major interest to Chinese leaders. Third and more generally, China's rise and its interests are by far not anymore restricted to the economic realm but have broadened to other sectors such as security, finance and development. So, it is interesting to consider whether this is also true in the case of labour rights.

In order to enable a detailed study, it was decided that the proposed research does not examine China's behaviour in the ILO in broad terms but rather focuses on its behaviour concerning two specific areas: Child Labour and Forced Labour. The Child Labour Convention and the Forced Labour Convention are the respective documents. They have been chosen for two particular reasons: First, they both belong to the eight fundamental ILO conventions and second, the former one has been signed by China in 2002 whilst the latter one has not been signed yet by the Chinese representatives. It is expected that the behaviour of the Chinese actors differs regarding the two different fields and therefore adds up to the insight gained from the examination of ILO. In these two areas, the author seeks to determine China's position in International Organizations by answering questions such as "Is China willing to follow the rules?", "Is it keen on taking the lead or does it reject to do so?" and "Is it willing to take over the responsibilities attached to a leadership position under the current liberal system?"

Various kinds of data are planned to be used. Concerning the general debate on China's future use will be made of the vast literature available, thus, articles from scholarly journals including the major reads on the topic displaying different theoretical backgrounds.

Regarding the case study, the ILO gives access to a wide range of sources. For the Governing Body, minutes of all meetings are available. Thus, it offers the opportunity to examine what representatives have to say to all different kinds of topics. In addition, there are other documents available such as annual reports which depict process in the various fields and programs. The International Labour Conference makes accessible speeches, records of votes as well as video recording. Further, the ILO has a Database on national labour, protection of children and young persons called NATLEX, produces Child Labour Statistics, reports on Child Labour Trends, and has a ILO Decent Work Country Program in the PRC which is the framework for the partnership between the ILO and China. Reviews and reports of programs and reports on the application of

standards and on complaint procedures are available as well.

Even though the ILO offers a very interesting case study on China as an actor in IOs, it needs to be acknowledged that there are some limitations. First of all, as the proposed research will be a case study, it is limited in its scope and its outcome is not meant to be generalized. It simply intends to add up to the literature on one of the most debated questions of current IR by providing an extensive and detailed case study on a poorly covered area. It is therefore necessary that extensive research will be done on different kinds of IOs, covering different areas, to get to the bigger picture. Second, the proposed research is limited as the author has no knowledge of Chinese and therefore only relied on documents published by the ILO in any of its official working languages.

6. Planned Structure

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Operationalization

1.3 Literature Review on China and the ILO

2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.2 An interest- and power-driven rationalist analysis in the context of economic liberalism

2.3 The Concept of International Organizations

2.4 The ILO

2.5 Status Quo and Revisionist Actors

3.1 Introduction to the debate about China's role in international organizations

3.2 Status Quo or Revisionist Actor?

3.3 Change over Time: Time as a factor

4.1 Case Study on China's Behaviour in the ILO

4.2 Child Labour Convention

4.3 Forced Labour Convention

5.1 Discussion of Findings

6.1 Conclusion

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1. Introduction

China's development over the last decades offers an impressive picture. In economic terms, it has surpassed the United States when GDP is measured in purchasing-power-parity and has the second-largest GDP worldwide when it is measured based on current prices. It further holds a large share of foreign exchange reserves and attracts high rates of Foreign Direct Investment. In addition, China's military capabilities increased. The impact of China's rise is no longer only felt in relation to economic and military aspects but has spread to other areas such as development aid, international security, or environmental protection, being reflected in increased participation in international organizations (IOs) of various kinds. As this rise has been so impressive and is linked with considerable implications for the international system, it is among the major topics currently discussed in the field of international relations. It is debated whether China's rise will be continuously peaceful or whether it will result in a major, whether it intends to be a status quo actor shaping, contributing to and benefiting from the current international system or a revisionist actor who seeks to overthrow the current system and setting up a new system along its own ideas.

As it is a highly-debated issue, potential answers are numerous. In the most basic terms, there are two major groups. On the one hand, those who believe that China cannot rise peacefully, an opinion which is mostly advocated by offensive realists. John Mearsheimer is its strongest proponent, he expects an intense security competition and is convinced that there is "no amount of good will [which] can ameliorate the intense security competition that sets in when an aspiring hegemon appears in Eurasia" (Mearsheimer, 2010, p.396). On the other hand, there are scholars who are convinced that peaceful rise is possible, they are usually proponents of liberal institutionalism. Alistair I. Johnston and David Shambaugh belong to this group of scholars. They argue that Chinese engagement in IOs will serve a peaceful rise as with increased interdependence, the costs for destructive actions significantly exceed the potential benefits.

Status quo and revisionist actors are concepts which are closely linked to the issue of rising states as they are used to categorize behaviour and stem from a desire to make rising powers' behaviour more tangible. Numerous actors have contributed to the definition of these concepts, however, there is no unanimity regarding the categorization of China.

This thesis seeks to contribute to the literature on China's rise and China's role in IOs and therefore in the international system by providing an in-depth case study of Chinese behaviour in the International Labour Organization (ILO). Concretely, it seeks to answer the question of how China behaves in the ILO – is it a status quo or a revisionist actor? Based on statements and reports, Chinese behaviour is interpreted. It is hypothesized that China acts rationally as it realized that participation in the ILO framework contains more benefits than costs, and therefore behaves like a status quo actor. This analysis is relevant to the literature as it provides insight into Chinese behaviour in a non-economic institution, thus, a realm that has not been extensively covered and therefore contributes to the understanding of China's role in the international system.

The thesis is organized as follows: The next section illustrates the research design of this thesis. The second chapter contains the theoretical framework and provides an overview on the concepts of status quo and revisionist actors in relation to rising powers, the literature on China's rise and on China and IOs in general, as well as an introduction to the ILO. All relevant concepts and term are illustrated and explained. The third chapter comprises the analysis of Chinese behaviour in the ILO. Statements and reports are examined regarding the issues of forced and child labour, other thematic specificities and concerning the structure and underlying strategy of the statements. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of the findings. In the fourth chapter, a conclusion is provided.

1.2 Research Design

As mentioned in the introduction, the research question asks whether Chinese behaviour in the ILO can be categorized as status quo or revisionist. This thesis therefore provides an in-depth case study examining Chinese behaviour in the ILO; the ILO which is a United Nations Specialized Agency serves as an example of a mainstream international organization. The concepts of status quo or revisionist are two concepts commonly used in the studies of international relations when it comes to the issue of rising powers. To find an answer to the research question, several sub questions must be considered as well: “Is China willing to follow the rules?”, “Is China keen on taking the lead in the international system or does it reject to do so?”, “Is China willing to take over

responsibilities which come with a leading role in the current liberal system?”, “Does China seek to set up a whole new system?”

It is hypothesized that since China rise started, it got entangled in the international system and its leadership realized the advantages the involvement brought. Cost/benefit analyses taught China’s leaders that benefits exceed costs which would make destructive behaviour cost-intensive. Thus, it is expected that the Chinese act rational and therefore, their behaviour in the ILO proves to be status quo rather than revisionist. It is assumed that they realized that participation in the ILO framework benefits them more than it harms. It is further hypothesized that China tries to use the organization’s rules to secure advantages. The two main reasons considered are material: First, the Chinese economy has reached a stage where it needs to reorient from manufacturing and cheap labour work to other areas to keep the economy profitable. This is important as economic success is a major source of Chinese leaders’ legitimacy. Second, it seems probable that China seeks to secure its lead from other developing states, especially India, and use the organization’s framework to further develop the Chinese economy and at the same time restrict other countries’ development. Thus, the Chinese economic interest makes them behave like a status quo power. This major interest is complemented by other minor ones such as the country’s public image and it is therefore also assumed that China use the ILO framework to increase its image concerning human rights of which the ILO promoted labour rights consist a significant part. As elaborated here, there are various reasons why it is hypothesized that China behaves like a status quo actor in the ILO, however, this case study does not seek to examine the causal relationships between the reasons and the assumed outcome, but exclusively concentrates on the examination of Chinese behaviour in the ILO.

The ILO, as an example of a mainstream IO, was chosen for several reasons. In contrast to the economic area and its organizations, the area covered by the ILO and Chinese behaviour within it has not yet attracted much scholarly attention even though labour rights are closely linked with the much-discussed economic realm. Its mission to promote worker’s rights and decent work for all men and women makes it an interesting case study for various reasons: First, China’s economic success is mostly based on the abundance of cheap labour, workers which the Chinese leadership for long managed to exploit under harsh conditions. Second, due to China’s extensive labour force, the effects of implemented labour rights are especially far-ranging. If they are not implemented and workers would manage to organize themselves, internal turmoil might

result and weaken the country, and its economic development, from the inside. Labour rights and standards should therefore become of major interest of Chinese leaders. Third and more generally, China's interests are no longer limited to its economic expansion but have broadened to other sectors such as finances, global security, and development.

To answer the research question, Chinese behaviour in the ILO is analysed based on its contributions to sittings of the ILC and the Governing Body. The analysis of these statements is supplemented with an examination of ILO reports evaluating projects and issue areas within the ILO framework. The information in these reports is further used to detect discrepancies between Chinese statements and Chinese actions which will help to categorize Chinese behaviour in the end. Within the timeframe of January 2012 to December 2016, all available records of meetings are analysed. A focus is set on the behaviour regarding forced labour and child labour; it is expected that the behaviour differs regarding the two areas as for forced labour, China has not yet signed the relevant conventions for forced labour while for child labour it has. This is expected to add to the gained insight. However, Chinese contributions on these specific issues are limited. Thus, in an effort to gain more insight into Chinese behaviour, all Chinese contributions in sittings are considered and interpreted.

To facilitate the interpretation of Chinese statements, they are compared with statements from two other countries, namely India and the US. This applies only to the sections on forced labour and child labour as they are the subjects in the focus and to the section elaborating on the structure of Chinese statements as the comparison is necessary to illustrate distinct features. India was chosen because it is also a member of the BRICS¹ and its status in the international system is comparable to that of China in certain regards. Both tend to act as leaders of the developing world and intend to keep their developing state status despite their massive development. Despite these similarities, India and China are at the same time fierce competitors regarding regional influence, economic development and military capabilities. These reasons make it interesting to compare whether they have similar positions and follow comparable strategies. The US have been chosen because currently, they are *the* status quo actor in the liberal international system and therefore offer a good point of comparison. The comparison is further interesting as the debate about China's rise is linked with the U.S.- China relationship and because the U.S. are one of the few states that have not yet

signed the Forced Labour Convention No. 29, just as China. Comparing the statements of these two countries with Chinese statements contributes to the analysis as it helps to classify the behaviour and to determine how different it is from the behaviour of others.

The sources and data processed in the analysis are provided by the various organs of the ILO. The International Labour Conference (ILC) makes accessible speeches, records of votes, video recording and records of its meetings. Unfortunately, the records of some meetings are not available, therefore, the results of the analysis are only based on those that are accessible. The Governing Body publishes minutes of all its meetings as well as decisions on institutional, political and administrative issues. The reports used to check for discrepancies between statements and actions are published by various organs of the International Labour Office. Additionally, other documents such as annual reports depicting progress in programs and areas are available. Moreover, the ILO provides access to a database on national labour, protection of children and young persons called NATLEX, in-house statistics, information leaflets and programme information. The supervisory organs issue reviews of programs, of the application of standards and on complaint procedures.

Even though this work explores an area which has not attracted much attention yet and therefore offers an interesting case study, there are limitations as well which are acknowledged here. First, as this work is a case study, its scope is limited and its outcome is not meant to be generalized. For a generalization of the findings, additional research within the ILO as well as in other non-economic organizations is necessary. This work only intends to contribute to the literature on one of the most debated topics of current international relations by providing a comprehensive case study on an area rarely covered. Second, this work is limited as the author relied solely on documents published by the ILO in either of its official working languages and was therefore unable to include Chinese documents or original Chinese statements to this analysis.

¹ An abbreviation for a group of emerging countries including Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

2. China's rise, Status Quo and Revisionist Actors, International Organizations and the ILO: A Theoretical Overview

This section provides an overview of the theoretical framework of this thesis, introducing all relevant aspects and concepts. The first section illustrates the literature on China's rise including explanations of the concepts of status quo and revisionist actors. The second section provides an overview over China in IOs, starting with the general issue of China and IOs, then narrowing the scope to China and the human rights regime, further to China and labour rights, and eventually to China, the ILO, and the Forced and the Child Labour Conventions. The third section connects with the second as it offers a detailed portrayal of the ILO, the relevant IO for this thesis.

2.1 China's Rise

The concepts of status quo and revisionist actors are frequently used in international relations studies and particularly often when it comes to classify China's rise which is currently among the most debated topics in IR. There are several layers to this debate: The starting point is Chinese behaviour in the international system which is the only observable factor. The second layer is whether and how this behaviour changed over time. The third layer asks the question of whether China will rise peacefully or not. Fourth and connected to the third layer, the question is whether China is and will be a status quo or a revisionist actor. Scholarly contributions to the debate and their answers to the questions cover a wide range of prospects of the future of China within the international system as they are influenced by different IR theories.

There are three general outlooks on China's rise: First, China actively supports the current international system, receives its spot in the managing thereof, and takes on the responsibilities linked to it. In this case, China would be labelled a status quo actor. Second, China becomes a spoiler who dismantles the current international system and sets up a completely new one along its own ideas. In this case, China would be labelled a revisionist actor. The third option stipulates that China becomes a shirker which means an actor that seeks to increase its power and to improve its position in the international system but does not want to take on its share of the responsibilities attached to it (Schweller & Pu, 2011). A lot of scholarly work is linked with either of these options. In very general terms, peaceful change is linked with China behaving like a status quo actor and advocated by liberal institutionalists and non-peaceful change

with China acting revisionist usually supported by realists. Nonetheless, more and more scholars find that the borders between the options are blurry, that classification is not clear cut and thus develop new terms to describe and explain China's behaviour.²

As this work aims to contribute to the literature on China's future role in the international system, it is necessary to explain the key terms. Therefore, the layers illustrated above will be answered in the given order, except for the first layer which is the basis for all other layers and is therefore not dealt with separately but included in the discussion of the other layers. All layers are interconnected.

2.1.1 Time as a Factor

Change over time is one factor that is significant in the debate. In between the 1990s and now, Chinese behaviour in the international system changed significantly. In the mid-1990s, the "responsible power" concept was prevailing which meant that China made every effort to show that it cared about its international reputation and respected the rules of the international system. Chinese leaders recognized the order and its rules as a substantial point of reference for domestic improvement (Deng, 2014).

From 2005 onwards, the behaviour changed as the Chinese leadership distrusted Western demands for greater global engagement and refused to take over responsibilities attached to being a stronger player in the system. Beijing did no longer identify as a responsible power, but became more revisionist, more assertive and more nationalist. The Western-led order and calls of Western states for reforms in China were criticized, and China refused to take on more responsibilities. To pressure for reform of the traditional IOs, Beijing found new partners to set up alternative organizations such as the BRICS development bank. As Deng puts it: "China [was] now less willing to obey, but more willing to demand globally" (2014, p.124). This becomes particularly visible regarding its neighbours – it penalized those states closely cooperating with the US and rewarded economic benefits to those lining up with itself (*ibid.*) In addition, China responded ever more hostile to other countries' actions and chose to escalate rather than deescalate conflicts. The roots thereof lay in the leadership's perceptions of the Chinese position in the international system and in domestic factors such as nationalism, pressure of interest groups, and a strong army (Friedberg, 2014). According to Deng, this behaviour does not have to lead to armed conflict as he believes

² See, for example, Barry Buzan's (2010) discussion of China's rise within the theoretical framework of the international society, p. 18.

it to be rather a symptom of a general aversion against the concept of global governance and international organizations in general.

Around 2009, Chinese leaders realized that their behaviour had not only harmed its reputation but also its interests. As a consequence, since 2013/2014, good neighbourhood policies are employed because “even a superpower needs friends and partners to cope with potential rivals more effectively” (Li, 2016, p. 249), which applies to China. Nevertheless, neighbours are still treated differently depending on their behaviour towards China and the US. According to Goldstein (2001), China now follows a strategy that has two components: On the one hand, sustaining the conditions benefiting China’s development while, on the other hand, minimizing the probability that others unite to oppose China. The opinions about the level of assertiveness of Chinese current policies differ. Whereas Li (2016) believes that despite the varying levels of assertiveness and the accompanying pressures exerted on its neighbours, the geopolitical reality of the region constraints whatever China wishes for, Friedberg (2014), in contrast, does not believe that the era of assertiveness ended but, in contrast, that it gets more complicated and demanding. Goldstein (2001) shares Friedberg’s concern, as he considers it possible that the Chinese strategy might shift again towards increased assertiveness. Deng (2014) as well as Li (2016) recognize that the shift in Chinese behaviour is closely related to whether the US is perceived a threat.

2.1.2 Peaceful rise or not – how is the system going to change?

Peaceful rise means that a rising power is capable to advance its status as well as material capabilities in absolute as well as in relative terms, compared to other powers in the system, without provoking conflict with its neighbours or other major powers (Buzan, 2010). There are various reasons why scholars believe or do not believe that China will rise peacefully. Johnston highlights that China is more engaged and integrated into regional and global organizations than it has ever been before and therefore capable of rising peacefully (2003). Beeson (2009) even affirms China significantly higher levels of enthusiasm than the US towards the order the US designed and in which China has become an active actor. While Bergsten (2008) limits his argument to the economic order, it points into the same direction. He is convinced that because China benefits from an efficient economic order, it would be in its interest to invest in the proper functioning of its rules and institutions rather than dreaming of an alternative order.

The assumed underlying reasons differ considerably. One assumption stipulates that China follows this path as it does not yet have realistic chances to successfully replace the US as the global hegemon. If there is no prospect of success, China will not be willing to invest in economic and military mobilization to balance US power in the Asia-Pacific region, even less so globally (Beeson, 2009; Johnston, 2003). It does not only lack material capabilities, but more crucially, a vision that could replace the US-led liberal order (Ikenberry, 2011; Kahler, 2013). However, domestic factors such as domestic unrest or political upheaval might cause a change of thought (Beeson, 2009; Johnston, 2003).

Another assumed reason for a peaceful rise is that China wishes to establish good relations with its neighbours or put differently, if China wants to prove that its rise is actually peaceful, it has to signal constraint to its neighbours (Acharya, 2014; Buzan, 2010; Ikenberry, 2011). Its new regional status is supposed to be based on the participation in regional organizations, the establishment of strategic partnerships and strengthening of bilateral relations, the growth of economic ties, and the reduction of fear in the area of security (Shambaugh, 2005). Shambaugh further believes that most regional countries no longer consider China a threat and that some are even looking to Beijing for regional leadership. Certainly, not all countries share this view yet, but he is convinced that they realize that China's rise is inevitable and that they need to deal with it. ASEAN members, for example, try to get China involved as much as possible to entangle it (2005). Acharya (2014) does not share the positive interpretation of Chinese regional engagement, as he rather considers it to be a technique to only sell but not necessarily practice the peaceful rise theory. However, regional engagement is positive to him as it indicates that regions are capable of constraining emerging hegemonies and therefore contribute to peace (ibid., 171). Shambaugh further does not believe that the change of the international system must be a zero-sum game. In his opinion, China's rise does not necessarily mean the US' decline. The region is big enough for both countries to follow their interests peacefully, even more so as he is convinced that these interests converge to a major extent. His vision is a regional system based on a US-led alliance system, an institutionalized normative system, unprecedented US-China cooperation and complex regional interdependence – a system where China is not a threat (2005). According to Li (2016), this would also be supported by regional countries as they prefer a working Sino-American relationship over choosing between them.

Ikenberry (2011) discusses the future of the liberal world order and the role of rising powers within it. He is aware that most of the currently rising states today are large, non-Western developing countries which are built on a set of cultural, political, economic and historical experiences different from those who created the current order. Consequently, their worries and interests are not the same as those of the developed states. He sees that a lot of people are afraid that the future international order will be shaped by China which directs it into an illiberal direction. However, he is convinced that “this panicked narrative misses a deeper reality” (Ikenberry, 2011, p. 56) because “[t]oday’s Western order, in short, is hard to overturn and easy to join” (Ikenberry, 2008, p. 24). In his opinion, the liberal order is not in danger as China and the other rising powers do not aim to change the fundamental rules of the order; they rather aim for more authority and leadership within it. As, for example Johnston, he argues that their rise has been benefited by the liberal order and is therefore tied to it. Consequently, it is in rising powers’ interest to preserve this system and not to change it forcefully. To Ikenberry, the liberal order has shown outstandingly capable of integrating rising powers because it is not only an US-led order, but more than this. China contests US leadership within the order, but not the order as such. Rising powers path to modernity runs through the current order as it gives them access to means fostering their development. Furthermore, considering the increasing number of international dangers, no state will be able to ensure its security and prosperity on its own, thus, all have an interest to preserve the liberal order (Ikenberry, 2011). Therefore, the liberal order has the potential to make a the change in power a peaceful change (Ikenberry, 2008).

Other scholars find themselves somewhere in between those clearly advocating a peaceful rise and those who do not. Dai and Renn (2016) argue that the integration of China into the current system will be more difficult than others have suggested because they found that China avoids deep commitment which goes against the global trend for more commitment. Broad and general principles are readily accepted, but more concrete, detailed and demanding ones are avoided. The commitment levels of its fellow UNSC members as well as of the other BRICS states are all higher. Buzan (2010) argues similarly: in general, peaceful rise is possible, however, China is at a turning point as those policies that contributed to a peaceful rise so far might not work any longer. Thus, a continued peaceful rise will get more difficult. Due to a lack in soft power and universalist ideology, the chances for China to get its self-perception in line

with how others see it are low. However, to achieve a peaceful rise, this it is crucial others accept Beijing's world view.

In contrast, other scholars believe that the change will not come about peacefully. Friedberg advocates the statement that "Europe's past could be Asia's future" (Friedberg, 1994, p. 7) which means that in the future Asia, rather than Europe, will be the battlefield of great power conflict. In his opinion, war has not lost all its appeal, particularly in Asia, a region which is diverse, rapidly changing and affected by mistrust, hostility and friction (Friedberg, 1994).

Reasons for change of the international order are most likely either military balancing or mismanagement and incompetence (Friedberg, 1994; Schweller & Pu, 2011). "History tells us that dramatic structural changes rarely unfold smoothly or peaceful" (Schweller & Pu, 2011, p. 42). According to Schweller and Pu, the international system currently enters a phase where the US perceives China as a threat which makes conflict more likely. Despite their believe in non-peaceful change in general, they highlight that, at the moment, China is reluctant to initiate rapid change and shies away from the responsibilities attached to it – and as long as China does not aim for radical change, a peaceful transition might be possible (Schweller & Pu, 2011). Bergsten (2008) argues that even though the US and the EU would prefer to integrate China into the order they build and defended over years, he believes that China has a different objective. He further thinks that China's engagement with its neighbours is only a means to calm their fears, not necessarily a sign of substantial involvement. To him China has a strategy which is at odds with the current order – the Chinese leadership disapproves of simply integrating into a system it had not role in developing. That is why they debate alternatives where China can influence the rules right from the start. However, he does not yet see that this means a revisionist challenge to the status quo.

Mearsheimer (2006, 2010) has a more radical stance. He is convinced that China cannot rise peacefully. Being an offensive realist, he expects an intense security competition with considerable potential for war because of a decline in the differences in terms of power between the US and China. In contrast to Shambaugh, he believes this process to intensify as he expects most Chinese neighbours to join the US in restricting China. Furthermore, he predicts not only that China will rise forcefully but that the US will act aggressively too. Mearsheimer acknowledges that it is hard to predict the future, but based on his realist convictions, he believes that China will act aggressively as soon

as it has the capacities to do so. To him there is “no amount of good will [which] can ameliorate the intense security competition that sets in when an aspiring hegemon appears in Eurasia” (2010, p.396).

One important factor needs to be kept in mind in this discussion on whether China’s rise and the connected change of the system will be peaceful: It is not necessarily the rise of one country that will cause a war, but the fear it triggers in others. Believing in the inevitability of conflict, can make war a self-fulfilling prophecy (Buzan, 2010; Nye, 2008).

2.1.3 Status Quo or Revisionist?

According to Hans Morgenthau (1978) “[t]he policy of the status quo aims at the maintenance of the distribution of power as it exists at a particular moment in history” (Morgenthau, 1978, p.46). He states that a status quo power does not only accept the current power distribution but also resists major power redistributions. However, minor changes which do not influence the relative power positions are consistent with status quo policies. The problem is that he does not specify which criteria distinguish minor and major changes and whether a desire for change mirrors a state’s actual behaviour. For Organski and Kugler, status quo states are characterized by their participation in establishing the rules of the game and the fact that they benefit from them (1980). As with Morgenthau, this definition is not very precise. Robert Gilpin (1981) takes a further step as he give the term rules of the game a more precise meaning. To him, they consist of the distribution of power, the hierarchy of prestige, and “rights and rules that govern or at least influence the interactions among states” (Gilpin, 1981, p. 34).

Opposed to status quo actors, revisionists are dissatisfied with their status in the system and therefore seek to change the rules to acquire a position which reflects its power (Organski & Kugler, 1980). Following the power transition theory, apart from parity and overtaking of power, the degree of dissatisfaction of a rising power with the status quo determines its behaviour and thus whether the transition will lead to a major war (ibid.). Dissatisfied actors believe that the international system does not provide them with the needed and deserved benefits: Thus, the system is believed to be biased and the actor is therefore likely to approve a substantial change of the system to eventually receive the deserved benefits (Tammen et al., 2000).

Lim (2015) examined China’s dissatisfaction with the East Asian status quo approved by the United States. The first indicator for dissatisfaction he uses is the

extraordinary growth of military expenditures: China qualifies as dissatisfied as its military expenditure and the modernization are considered to be extraordinary. The second indicator is the similarity in domestic political institutions with the hegemon. Again, China qualifies as dissatisfied. It is further crucial whether the rising state offers an alternative model that is attractive to many states. The third indicator are relationships with other countries measured by the rate of participation in international institutions and the willingness to comply with their rules. Generally, the Chinese participating rate is relatively high. However, Lim argues that China abuses these organizations, for example regarding ASEAN, trying to change the rules in a way that opposes their original sense. He concludes that China is very dissatisfied with the regional status quo and therefore believes that the prospect for peaceful power transition from the US to China is unlikely. Lemke and Tammen (2003) come to a similar conclusion: if there is a deep-seated aversion within the Chinese leadership against the West and everything that characterized its hegemony, the likelihood for war is high. Nevertheless, they suggest a second option which opposes Lim's conclusion. They believe that a major war can be avoided if China does not have a desire for change of the international system's norms and rules while transitioning to the most powerful state. The model for this is the peaceful transition from British to US leadership; in this case, China would be labelled a satisfied preeminent power (Lemke & Tammen, 2003).

As the borders between the concept of status quo and revisionist are sometimes blurry, categorization of behaviour is often not clear cut. Thus, there are scholars negating the existence of status quo regarding rising powers and others that introduce variations of the concepts. Mearsheimer (2014), is an advocate of the former proposition. Following his offensive realist perceptions, all great powers are revisionist as they seek to achieve a maximum of security in an anarchic system which is why he believes that China cannot rise peacefully (Mearsheimer, 2006). He stipulates that the history of great power politics is primarily characterized by clashing revisionist states (Mearsheimer, 2014). Snyder (2002) criticizes Mearsheimer's stance for an overemphasis on security maximization determining state's behaviour. In addition, defensive realists oppose Mearsheimer saying that states are usually satisfied with the status quo if their own security is not in danger. Thus, rising states do not necessarily aim for the maximum of power and security (Glaser, 1996).

Xiao (2015) also assumes that all rising powers aim for rule change, however, to him it matters in which way they seek to achieve this goal. Thus, he does not share Mearsheimer's view, but thinks that the opposing concepts of status quo and revisionist are insufficient and must be complemented. According to Xiao, there is a third concept which is reform-minded status quo. Such an actor is generally satisfied with the system but voices its concerns about shortcomings and believes that these can be repaired. Change is attempted through consensus-building, negotiation, accommodation and seen in a long-term perspective. In his view, China is such an actor as it does not aim to overthrow a system which benefited its rise but nevertheless seeks to reform the flaws of the system. He considers this a contrast to the radical and unilateral way of change that revisionist actors follow. Thus, reformist and revisionist are to be distinguished.

Ikenberry (2011) shares this view as he acknowledges that China intends to renegotiate its position, however, while accommodating the rules of the current order. A "Beijing model" based on exclusive blocs, spheres of influence, and mercantilist networks would only work if a limited number of states exploits an open system of markets – if the majority of states would do so, the open system no longer exists but rather a fragmented, mercantilist, and protectionist one. This is not in China's interest. If China would move in this direction nonetheless, acting inside and outside of the liberal order, Ikenberry would label China a spoiler, not a reform-minded status quo actor. Buzan (2010) introduces another label for China. To him, reformist revisionist is most fitting because China complies with some institutions of the international system for strategic reasons, but it opposes and seeks to reform others and possibly wants to change its status. Andornino (2010) believes China to use a form of preventive revisionism, claiming to defend the true spirit of the UN by requesting equal participation in the creation of international norms for all countries and the protection of every state's sovereignty from infringements. A quest that has been especially welcomed in the developing world.

Xiao's specifications connect with those of Schweller and Pu (2011) as they also claim that an intermediate form exists between status quo and revisionist. Their main proposition is that a unipolar system makes every attempt to balance automatically a revisionist action by definition, however, this does not necessarily mean that this actor really seeks to overthrow. Thus, if China seeks to restore a balance it would be labelled revisionist, however, it would not necessarily be revisionist. They label this behaviour limited-aims revisionist. The concept is contrasted by unlimited-aims-revisionists who

are not only by definition revisionist but actually seek to overthrow the system. The latter must delegitimize the hegemon's rule before he can start to actively challenge him. Both can employ a strategy of so-called rightful resistance which means that a weaker actor approves the hegemon's rule temporarily to be able to use the means available within the system to contest the hegemon, either to improve their position without having a particular desire for fundamental change or as a step within its long-term strategy of overthrowing. Depending on the different use of the strategy, it might either happen that the rising power gets so deeply involved that the costs of overthrowing would exceed the benefits from it or that it increases its relative gains step by step to eventually radically change the system. If China's impressive growth is considered as success under the existing order, it is likely that continued revisionist aims would become too costly. Examples of rightful resistance are the creation of and/or participation in new institutions, voting against the US in IOs, setting the agenda, denouncing US unilateralism or Chinese soft power diplomacy in the developing world. The crucial point is that resistance to the system does not automatically make a rising power a revisionist actor. It is further important to notice that some of the presented variations label the same behaviour differently – for one scholar, a particular behaviour is reform-minded status quo while another scholar calls it limited-aims-revisionist. It shows how blurry the lines are between the concepts.

Kahler (2013) offers an illustration to the argument that there is more than status quo and revisionist and that desire for change does not automatically indicate revisionist intentions. He argues that “the impact of large emerging economies on global governance is unlikely to be revolutionary” (ibid., p. 712). Their desire to gain as much as possible from their participation in the international system while at the same time giving up as little decision-making autonomy as possible, does not distinguish them from other powers. To him it is more likely that they behave conservatively rather than like radical reformers. Domestic economic and political constraints have as a consequence an antipathy to risk and an unwillingness to assume global leadership roles. Nevertheless, this conservative behaviour can pose a challenge if it results in free-riding. The decisive factors in determining whether rising powers pose a challenge are: their preferences, their capabilities to influence, the effectiveness of their strategies, and bargaining between the rising powers and the US, the EU and Japan. Concerning their preferences, none of the emerging powers seeks to overthrow, they rather demand more influence and are therefore moderate performers at best. Generally, the trend is

convergence towards the status quo. Discussions on reforms are mostly centred on the participation in rule creation and not on the content of the rules as such. Regarding the capabilities to influence their bargaining position, there is an increase, particularly concerning China, however, the mobilization of these capabilities is often restricted by domestic factors and result in a reluctance to shoulder substantial costs in international bargains. The effectiveness of the strategies remains limited as neither South-South nor regional cooperation has reliably supported the bargaining power of the emerging countries. Further, by accommodating China and the others into organizations and letting them expand their influence, they expressed their consent for the principle of hierarchy, thus, lost a topic they could bargain for with the established powers. Despite this illustration showing that rising powers are not automatically revisionist, the chances of conflict due to distributional questions or institutional efficiency remain and can eventually lead to revisionist behaviour.

The beforementioned explanations and illustrations provide a valuable introduction to grasp the concepts of status quo and revisionist, however, they are too broad which is why Johnston's (2003) contributions to the issue are illustrated. According to Johnston (2003) the-rising-power-equals-revisionist-argument is not useful to provide a comprehensive view of Chinese diplomacy. He therefore developed ³ five indicators grouped into two sets to examine whether a specific state is part of the status quo community, and thus a status quo actor, or not. They are illustrated in the following and range from least challenging to the status quo to most challenging. Even though this thesis does not examine Chinese behaviour in the whole international system and therefore not the status quo community, these indicators are still relevant and therefore need to be explained. Not all of them are directly applicable to the specific case study, however, they provide a helpful starting point to classify Chinese behaviour in the ILO.

The first set deals with the question of how eager an actor is in questioning the rules and norms of major IOs which most actors support most of the time. First, the actor's participation rates in IOs is low – a non-status quo actor is one that deliberately abstains from participating in IOs even though it is eligible to join. Johnston stipulates that states with fewer resources which are less involved in the global economy are less involved in IOs. The more developed a country becomes, the more it engages with

³ They are based on Gilpin's rules of the game discussion.

others and the demand for institutions which regulate this engagement increases. This kind of actors might be least challenging to the status quo as they do not pose a direct threat, are therefore not revisionist, nevertheless, they are a non-status quo actor, not a status quo actor. Second, the actor joins IOs but once it is a part it disregards the rules and norms; therefore, it might also be considered a non-status quo actor as it is difficult to check on the compliance with international norms. Norms are not necessarily written down and therefore open to interpretation, can change with time and are therefore hard to measure. In addition, different norms tend to contradict each other⁴. Third, the actor joins and accepts the rules but if given a chance, he will try to change them substantially. There are two different components to this indicator: is the actor trying to change the formal and informal principles of IOs in which it participates; and does it regularly oppose the interest of unconditional status quo members. The latter would not necessarily mean that the actor acts completely out of the status quo community but rather that there is a conflict with the US in particular. It is further important to notice that even if an actor tried to change an IOs' rules, this will not be an easy task as IOs have their own rules about changing rules to prevent that its purpose is easily changed. Revisionist actors would therefore need a super coalition or bypass single actor's veto to achieve their goal (Johnston, 2003).

The second set is concerned with the position towards and the management of the distribution of material power which seems unfair to the rising power. The fourth indicator is therefore whether an actor prefers to fundamentally redistribute material power. And if this preference exists, is there a plan along which the actor seeks to realize this preference? Do they get active to achieve this aim? Fifth, the actor does not only prefer fundamental redistribution of material power but also behaves accordingly by considering military power a decisive element to reach that goal. The question here is whether the actor has a strategy which combines its diplomacy and its military capabilities to reach its goal and whether he is actively involved in balancing the hegemon – be it internally⁵ or externally⁶. Further, it is important to acknowledge that just because there is no evidence it does not mean that revisionist claims do not exist (Johnston, 2003).

⁴ For example, humanitarian interventions as part of the human rights regime and sovereignty.

⁵ Mobilize economic, technological, and human resources to increase one's power vis-à-vis the hegemon.

⁶ State build alliances to balance the hegemon.

In addition to these indicators, it is important to notice that level of revisionism in an actor's behaviour is not static – it does change when the circumstances change, internal as well as external (Johnston, 2003). Moderate rhetoric might just be a sign of cautiousness to avoid being regarded as a revisionist actor (Xiao, 2015).

2.2 China and IOs

General literature on the relationship of China and IOs is scarce as the topic is often covered in research on China and Global Governance and/or the international system which does not fall into the scope of this thesis and is therefore not presented.

Furthermore, numerous scholars decided to work on more specific issues. Nevertheless, there are several authors which dealt with a rather general stance on the topic. The most active among these is Ann Kent who has published several works on the topic of China and IOs. In 2002, she published an article dealing with the question of whether the participation in IOs does not only benefit China in terms of power and prestige, but also initiated a sense of accountability and responsibility towards the international community within the Chinese leadership. It is thus examined whether international socialization occurs. There are three main findings: first, sovereignty is the most important concept in Chinese Foreign Policy which aggravates socialization; second, China seeks to promote its interests but is also willing to make compromises except on humanitarian intervention and self-determination; third, it developed a pragmatic stance over time. Even though major problems remain which make China's behaviour unpredictable, she considers the country's integration remarkable considering its history and background (Kent, 2002). In 2007, she published a book which seeks to answer the following questions: Is the multilateral system a key reason for authoritarian states to join IOs? What influence does China have on the set-up of IOs? In addition, she gives an historical overview showing China's development within the system of IOs. A crucial message from this book is that it is necessary to engage rather than contain authoritarian countries such as China for the sake of global security. Nevertheless, she finds that the principles of sovereignty and self-interest remain crucially important which is why China's willingness to adapt differs with the IO; regarding security issues adaption is most common whilst adaption to human rights regimes is very constrained (Kent, 2007).

Xiaojun (2010) published a study on China's motivation for joining IOs and offers an alternative explanation to the traditional ones based on either (neo-)realist or

(neo-)liberal institutionalist, rationalist approaches. He tries to answer the question of “why would China want to join institutions that considerably constrain its freedom of action and compel it to assume commitments that are at odds with its economic and security interests?” (Xiaojun, 2010, p. 349). His answer is that socializing effects of IOs and social rewards motivate China, more specifically, he found that there are three reasons which make China participation more likely: the centrality of an IO in the international system, a decent number of Asian members, and the membership of all permanent UNSC members.

Qingjiang (2014) studied China’s approach to international institutions starting the moment the country joined the WTO. He summarizes that other WTO members criticize China’s behaviour as they consider it to enjoy the benefits without living up to the commitments and obligations. In his view, “China’s attitudes [...] can be summarized as general compliance with international norms, increasing interest in using norms to its advantage, and outspoken aspiration for a change toward balanced order” (Qingjiang, 2014, p. 981). Further, he believes that China still searches its way between compliance and reform.

Ying (2016) follows a comparable path even though he has a more positive view on China’s position in IOs. He notes that China is a member comparable to others and feels a certain commitment. It does not only participate but also contribute to the development of IOs and engages in its reform.

Narrowing the scope, the literature on China and the Human Rights Regime is elaborated. In general, this is a topic which is widely covered, in broader terms as well as very specific topics of which some are illustrated here. Several authors dealt with China’s stance towards human rights, some examining the Chinese leadership’s attitude, others the view from outside the country. Kent (1999b) published a book on China, the United Nations and human rights where she examines China’s compliance, socialization, and effectiveness regarding Chinese participation in UN human rights regime. It is further examined in how far China internalizes norms or only adapts to them instrumentally and whether it seeks to circumvent or reform them. In addition, she analyses the capabilities of the responsible organs in monitoring China. Foot (2010) covers the relationship between human rights and China’s international relations by giving an overview over its development. She argues that China’s domestic human rights standards have been a matter of global concern for long. As time went by, China developed a more and more confident behaviour and became less sensitive to criticism.

Nowadays, China's dealing with human rights-abusing governments is getting at least as much attention as the situation within the country.

Wu (2002) deals with the representation of China's stance on human rights in principle and practice since 1949. He argues that the country's views are considerably shaped by Marxist-Leninist and Maoist thought which distinguishes the Chinese perception of human rights from the Western. Nevertheless, Chinese perceptions changed over time as party policy did.

Tao (2015) asks why China rejected the Rome Statute of the ICC while at the same time it significantly increased its engagement in IOs in general. In his opinion, there are two reasons: first, state sovereignty is considered more crucial than human rights and acceptance of the statute would imply high sovereignty costs; second, the jurisdiction of the ICC could threaten the country's security and territorial unity. He therefore draws the conclusion that China's socialization is still weak as international treaties are only signed when not threatening the beforementioned principles and its further integration to the human rights regime will not be straightforward. Primiano and Xiang (2016) conducted research on China's voting behaviour in the UNGA and found that in 79% of the time, their vote supported human rights resolutions. They concluded that the country's human rights record is not as bad as it is widely reported even though they must acknowledge that this behaviour may be tactical to reach other aims.

Inboden and Chen (2012) analysed China's response to international human rights pressure. They found that the state defines every aspect of the Chinese approach towards human rights, thus, a change in the state identity aiming for a strong socialist state constituted a crucial turning point. Regarding the pressure, they think that the Chinese leadership has successfully escaped it by acting strategically and using its economic and political strength. They, however, observed as well that pressure did not go by unnoticed – China became more aware of its image which resulted in increased engagement in the human rights regime. Dingding (2009) has found similar results. In his opinion, the redefinition of the state identity to a modern socialist state led to increased engagement in the human rights regime. He does not deny the contribution of external and structural factors to this development, but highlights that action by the Chinese leadership has been crucial.

In turn, other authors focus on the relationship between economic issues and human rights in China. Chan (2008) discussed whether the WTO has the legal backing to influence China's human rights development through its dispute resolution and

enforcement mechanisms. He concludes that reliance on WTO mechanisms to develop or enforce human rights standards would negate the intensive efforts that have been made in the last decades to set-up an independent human rights system. In addition, expecting human rights enforcement through the WTO would be self-deception. Chow (2013) examined why China disapproves of human rights in the WTO and found that the debate about it masks an economic and legal issue as an moral and institutional issue. He argues that the underlying issue is whether China can be allowed to make full use of its low labour costs or whether developed countries should have the opportunity to neutralize this advantage through quotas and tariffs under the pretence of a human rights issue. Following this argumentation, it seems obvious why China does not support human rights in the WTO.

Among others, Ding (2012) deals with the use of human rights in foreign policy. He examines the attractiveness of Chinese soft power based on the country's performance in spreading their own definition of human rights and claims that the Chinese path attracted several developing countries which broadened the country's leverage towards the West. However, "China's human rights record is the Achilles' heel of Chinese soft power, since China lacks the moral leadership to wield soft power effectively" (Ding, 2012, p.662).

Narrowing the scope further down to labour rights, existing literature is more limited. Most publications focus on narrowly defined topics within labour rights or problems that occur due to the ignorance of these rights. Sun, Xu, Shao, and Wang (2014) published a comparative study on China's and the US' laws, rights and administrative structures in occupational health as they realized that China is significantly lagging behind and could learn from the US. Changzheng (2001) dealt with the WTO and China's labour standards and in how far trade-related issues such as worker's rights will be crucial issues in negotiations in the 21st century. Chan, Chen, Xie, Wei, and Walker (2014), for example, examined workers' occupational health and safety in the automotive industry and claim that due to the ignorance of politicians and management, these workers become "disposable human bodies with a use-by date" (Chan et al., 2014, p. 522). Maternity insurance is covered in research by Liu and Sun (2015) who investigated whether ILO standards are applied and found that China is lagging behind even though it one of the very few countries that established a separate maternity insurance scheme. The Maritime Labour Convention and its significance for China and the resulting restructuring are covered in a study by Zhang and Zhao (2014).

Chen (2007; 2016) covers a broader range as he examined the development of labour rights in China. He claims that the state follows a strategy that transfers individual rights on workers but deprives them of collective rights. This led to a lack of organized labour movements which thus aggravates the further development of labour rights. Merchant (2004) follows a similar line of argumentation. He examined labour rights in China as well and argues that the country should adhere to the ILO conventions and follow its standards as this would be beneficial in the transition from market-economy to a free market. More concretely, he argues that collective rights such as the right to organize and bargain collectively should be granted.

Literature on China and the ILO is relatively rare. Ann Kent is a major scholar publishing work on China and the ILO, she did so as she felt a lack of literature. Moreover, she criticized that the detailed work available focuses on economic organizations such as GATT and the WTO, a criticism that still applies today. Her work illustrates that the ILO has the potential to influence China significantly regarding international labour standard-setting as well as specific issues relevant to the country. As a self-proclaimed workers' state, China is concerned about the opinion of other ILO members and about being seen to comply with ILO standards. Despite that potential, the relationship had continuous ups and downs. Chinese leaders' attitudes towards the ILO often changed as several factors such as the desire for economic modernization, the Chinese political system and its increasing participation in the international system conflicted with each other. They further feared the impact of granted labour rights on its extensive workforce. In addition, the ILO sometimes was not immune towards China's status as a permanent member of the UNSC and regional leader (Kent, 1999a). For long, the relationship was characterized by claims for special rights while requesting a special exemption from responsibilities. After 1989, it started to adapt itself organizationally and fulfil its obligations, and from 1994, there have been signs of cognitive learning regarding some basic labour standards as well. The attitude changed and China began to accept some ILO standards and its applicability to China, therefore, complying with formal requirements (Kent, 1997, 1999a). She argues that "changing perceptions of self-interest combined with international organizational pressures may be effective in promoting China's cognitive, as well as instrumental, learning" (1997, p.532). The major topics in China's relationship with the ILO were and are the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining and linked to that the issue of independent trade unions. In addition, there is a strong emphasis on technical assistance

There is no existing literature covering China and the Child and the Forced Labour Convention. Kagan (2013), however, touches upon the issue as she published a research on labour trafficking in China which comprises an area of forced labour. She argues that even though labour trafficking occurs increasingly often, Chinese authorities do not consider this as priority area to be dealt with. Consequently, she offers recommendations to improve the authorities dealing with the issue. First, the legislative and policy framework needs to be considerably revised. Second, enforcement procedures need to be adjusted and executed in accordance with the revised framework.

2.3 The International Labour Organization

2.3.1 General

The ILO is the UN Specialized Agency responsible for the realm of work. It was created in 1919 on the acknowledgement that social justice and internationally accepted human and labour rights are necessary to achieve universal and enduring peace (Liese & Schleifer, 2012). It has 187 member states and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The headquarters are complemented by technical experts and field offices in more than 40 countries (International Labour Organization, 2016c). One of its main principles is tripartism which makes it a unique UN agency, bringing together representatives of governments, employers and workers. It introduces labour standards, establishes policies and programs which advocate decent work for all (International Labour Organization, 2017h). This has not lost its relevance over the years because “more people labour on an assembly line today than at any other moment in world history” (Jensen & Lichtenstein, 2016, p. 2) and thus need the ILO to work in their favour. Governments learned that the ILO’s work contributes to social stability, political legitimacy and improvement of domestic living standards (Jensen & Lichtenstein, 2016).

2.3.2 History

The ILO’s foundation in 1919 was based on the Treaty of Versailles and mirrored the conviction that social justice was a prerequisite for lasting peace. It further reflected a heightened awareness for economic interdependence and comprehension that cooperation was needed to adjust working conditions across countries that competed for markets. Its constitution also reflected the desire for lasting peace and listed areas in which improvement was necessary to contribute to this goal. Among these were the

regulation of working hours, unemployment prevention, health conditions at work, protection of those more vulnerable such as children, women, the old and injured, freedom of association and equal pay for equal work. Most of these topics have not lost their relevance. When the ILC first met in 1919, six major International Labour Conventions were adopted, dealing with working hours, unemployment, maternity protection, night work for women and the youth, and minimum age. In 1944, the constitution was complemented with an annex, called the Declaration of Philadelphia, which contains the charter of aims and objectives of the ILO and highlights that labour is not a commodity which requires the establishment of basic human and economic rights for countries to adhere to (International Labour Organization, 2017f). In 1969, the ILO becomes the first UN Specialized Agency which received a Nobel Peace Prize. Over the course of history, the ILO tried to adjust to changing circumstances and therefore issued a couple of documents to strengthen their mission and impact. In 1998, the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work was published which was comprised of a set of crucial labour standards (International Labour Organization, 2016c; Jensen & Lichtenstein, 2016). In 2008, the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization was adopted to explain the ILO's vision in the time of globalization. Recently, this has been complemented by the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development which focuses on decent work for all within a framework of policies for sustainable and inclusive growth and development (International Labour Organization, 2016c).

Jensen and Lichtenstein (2016) elaborate on the organization's development and found that it has not been without problems; its history has seen various controversies. One lasting major problem was to form a truly international organization which looks beyond the members of the North Atlantic community. In its first years, it has been very Eurocentric which made it complicated to react and adapt to the circumstances and needs of countries in other regions of the world. Only after WWII, the ILO adjusted its mission and shifted its focus towards the "Third World". Economic development and technical assistance as well as rural development and agrarian reform became the crucial issues dealt with by the ILO in its new member states. Over this focus, the ILO seemed to have forgotten to spread its main mission, namely labour rights and specifically the freedom of association. Only after some of these countries developed remarkably fast, using their abundance of cheap labour, these traditional areas of interest reappeared on the agenda. In addition, the inclusion of new members such as the

states of the former Soviet Union or former Western colonies proved difficult as they were sceptical of the organizations commitment to tripartism and social dialogue. The beforementioned factors show that the desire for modernization clashed several times with the organization's core conventions and convictions (Jensen & Lichtenstein, 2016).

2.3.3 Activities

The ILO's activities are based on its mission to promote decent work for all. Along the organization's definition, decent work means "work that takes place in freedom, equity, security and dignity" (International Labour Organization, 2017k). It further pursues the creation of jobs, safeguarding labour rights, strengthening social protection and advancing social dialogue (International Labour Organization, 2016c). These aims are enshrined in its main program called Decent Work Agenda. There are four key purposes: the establishment of standards, norms and rights at work, increase decent employment and income opportunities, improve the applicability and effectiveness of social protection, and reinforce social dialogue and tripartism (International Labour Organization, 2017h; Kent, 1999a). Norms and rights at work include the freedom of association and right to collective bargaining and the abolition of child and forced labour as well as discrimination on such grounds as race, gender or nationality (Jensen & Lichtenstein, 2016).

Concretely, the ILO is mainly occupied with policy formulation, agenda-setting and the distribution of programs in the realm of labour conditions and rights (Liese & Schleifer, 2012). The program is distributed to the members through individual Decent Work Country Programs together with national development plans and UN programming frameworks (International Labour Organization, 2017i; Liese & Schleifer, 2012). The programs are complemented by technical cooperation, training education, and research and data collection activities to support effective implementation (International Labour Organization, 2017h; Liese & Schleifer, 2012). Additionally, the ILO is a busy actor in development cooperation by strengthening its constituents' capacities (International Labour Organization, 2017e). Its activities are financed through three instruments: the regular budget which consists of members' contributions where the exact amount is assigned by the UN, a regular budget supplementary account funded by voluntary contributions which are not project-bound, and extra-budgetary technical cooperation resources which are voluntary and project-bound (International Labour Organization, 2017i; Liese & Schleifer, 2012).

Standards are enshrined in conventions which have to be ratified and are legally binding or recommendations which are not binding but provide basic guidelines (Kent, 1999a; Liese & Schleifer, 2012). The application of these standards, concretely of conventions and recommendations after adoption and ratification, is supervised by discovering areas where application must be improved. Under the regular system of supervision, a committee of experts and a tripartite committee examine reports transmitted by member states. Under special circumstances, procedures can be started based on the submission of a representation or complaint (International Labour Organization, 2017c; Liese & Schleifer, 2012). The supervisory system builds on dialogue and persuasion mostly using reports and surveys and has no enforcement mechanism. The response to non-compliance are either country missions or the establishment of a commission of inquiry (Kent, 1999a).

The effectiveness of the mechanism is disputed as it requires the cooperation of all ILO constituents for their functioning. Without their cooperation, the enforcement of international labour standards is not possible. An example for the limited effectiveness are the prolonged discussions with Myanmar in relation to its non-compliance with the Forced Labour Convention (Liese & Schleifer, 2012). Furthermore, scholars contest that ILO conventions have a positive impact on the rights they seek to improve. Peksen and Blanton (2017) find that the ratification of fundamental ILO conventions is important in recognizing rights of workers, however, they undermined their actual implementation. There is a negative relationship between ratification and respect for worker rights. To them, ILO convention are particularly likely to lead to “radical decoupling” which means that ratified conventions have the opposite of their intended effects. Ratification shows support of international labour standards, but as the ILO has no effective enforcement mechanism, no punishment or costs are to be feared in case the standards are not implemented. Conventions are thus ratified to evade real change.

The results of Peksen’s and Blanton’s study are not surprising when looking at the reasons why states commit to international labour standards. Baccini and Koenig-Archibugi (2014) find that “ratification decisions should be expected to be interdependent not only insofar as they reflect competitive considerations, but also insofar as they reflect a desire to belong to a normative community of states” (pp.447-448). Thus, ratification by either economic competitors or social peers influences the ratification behaviour of other states. Regarding the former, states are keen to avoid situations in which they commit themselves to higher standards while their competitors

fail to do so or even lower them. Concerning the latter, social peers mean states to which a state is intensely linked through IOs; ratification of standards to which social peers committed proves a state's membership to a normative community. Thus, both drivers of ratification are not based on a deep commitment to the content of a standard, it is therefore not a surprise that, eventually, ratification does not necessarily improve workers' rights. In regard to forced labour, it has been found, that social peer pressure is not effective if it clashes with a fundamental belief of what factors constitute a legitimate development strategy (Baccini & Koenig-Archibugi, 2014).

Further results stipulate that it has no impact on the ratification decision whether a state is developed or developing, whether a state's neighbours or a high number of states already ratified (Baccini & Koenig-Archibugi, 2014). In contrast, legal traditions have an impact: states with common law traditions are less likely to ratify conventions as are those who have not ratified other major human rights treaties (Baccini & Koenig-Archibugi, 2014; Peksen & Blanton, 2017).

2.3.4 Organizational Structure

The ILO has two main working principles: tripartism which means a cooperative partnership of representatives of governments, employers and workers in aiming for the achievement of the organization's goals, and social dialogue which stipulates that workers and employers jointly have an equal voice as governments (International Labour Organization, 2017g). Thus, non-state actors are fully involved in decision-making process and not limited to lobbying or external expertise which is unique among IOs (Furtak, 2015; Kent, 1999a; Liese & Schleifer, 2012). Regarding the principles of tripartism, there is a problem. The strength and legitimacy of the ILO is partly based on this unique commitment to tripartism, however, the decline of trade union power ever more often restricts this commitment to nothing more than formalism. The decline can be seen in the downturn of union membership to under 20% in half the countries which are under the supervision of the ILO – the decline is specifically intense in countries along the Pacific Rim (Jensen & Lichtenstein, 2016).

There are three key organs. First, the ILC, the legislative organ, which meets annually to set and approve new international labour standards as well as the organization's work plan and budget. It is further a forum for discussion. The country delegations are comprised of two government representatives, one worker and one

employer representative⁷. Every representative has the same rights and can vote independently (International Labour Organization, 2017b; Liese & Schleifer, 2012).

The Governing Body is the executive council of the ILO and meets three times a year. It decides on policies, the agenda of the ILC, endorses the draft program and budget before it is handed on to the ILC, and elects the Director-General. There are 56 titular members, split into 28 governments and 14 employers and workers respectively and 66 deputy members, split into 28 governments as well but 19 employers and workers respectively. 10 titular government seats are permanently occupied by key economic actors, the other government members are elected by the ILC every three years. The employer and worker members are elected by the members of their respective groups (International Labour Organization, 2017a; Liese & Schleifer, 2012).

The International Labour Office is the permanent secretariat currently headed by Director-General Guy Ryder. Its tasks are the provision of services to the ILC and the Governing Body such as data collection, consultation of governments, and the coordination of technical assistance and research activities (International Labour Organization, 2017d; Liese & Schleifer, 2012).

Apart from these three main organs, there are tripartite committees representing vital industries and the Committee of Experts and the Committee on the Freedom of Association which are vital for the supervisory mechanism. They examine governmental application of ILO standards and reports to the ILC (International Labour Organization, 2017f; Liese & Schleifer, 2012). Regional specific topics are discussed periodically in regional meetings (International Labour Organization, 2017g).

3. Analysis of Chinese behaviour in the ILO

This analysis examines the behaviour of China in the ILO based on its contributions to discussions in the panel of the ILC and the Governing Body. Chinese behaviour regarding forced and child labour is a major thematic bloc, it is however, complemented by a general analysis of all statements available within the defined time period to illustrate which issues are crucial to the Chinese representatives and therefore, offer a broader picture of Chinese behaviour. Therefore, significant topics as well as formulations, the structure of the statements and a potential underlying strategy are

⁷ Employer and worker representatives are nominated in agreement with the most representative national organizations of employers and workers.

examined. The analysis of each issue usually contains three sub-sections: first, the examination of Chinese statements; second, the investigation of discrepancies of what has been said and what China actually does, mostly based on ILO reports; and third, the categorization of Chinese behaviour into status quo or revisionist regarding the discussed issue. There are a few exceptions to this general structure: The sections on forced labour and child labour start with a general introductory section as they are the issues in the focus. Further, some sections on specific formulations as well as the section on the structure and strategy do not include a sub-section on discrepancies because it would not make any sense in that specific context. These sections serve the aim of showing distinct features of Chinese statements which cannot be tested against Chinese actions.

3.1 Forced Labour

Forced labour is a major topic in the work of the ILO and defined as situations in which people are made to work against their free will using violence, the threat thereof, or other means such as debt bondage, withhold of their identity papers or threat of denunciation to authorities. A recent estimate counts 20.9 million people as victims of forced labour worldwide. 55% of them are women and girls, whereas 45% are men and boys. Roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of those affected are adults. Most forced labourers are exploited in the private economy by companies or individuals, out of these, 22% are exploited as sex workers and the remaining 68% in economic sectors such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing or domestic work. The remaining 10% are forced to work by state entities such as prisons or armies. There is forced labour in every region of the world, but over 50% of all forced labourers worldwide are found in the Asia-Pacific region. Forced labour is a crime under international law, however, prosecution is largely unsuccessful. One reason is that forced labour mostly occurs out-of-sight of the respective authorities which makes its detection as well as research and the set-up of statistics difficult (International Labour Organization, 2012).

Within the ILO, forced labour belongs to the category of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW), the respective conventions are the Forced Labour Convention No. 29 and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention No. 105. Both belong to the category of fundamental conventions, Convention No. 29 is even one of the most ratified ILO conventions (Evaluation Office, 2015a). The ILO continuously advocates its universal ratification as a sign of the ILO's effectiveness in the

international system (Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on the Strategic Objective of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work [CRDSOFPRW], 2012). However, the progress towards universal ratification is very slow as is the actual progress in ending forced labour. China remains one of the few countries that has not yet ratified the Forced Labour Convention (International Labour Organization, 2016b). In 2014, there were still 21 million victims which is why the ILC decided to issue additional instruments to supplement Convention No. 29 (International Labour Conference, 2014e). The protocol and the recommendation are introduced as “an important milestone” (International Labour Conference, 2014c, p. 14).

3.1.1 Statements⁸

Forced labour is an issue which is regularly mentioned in opening statements and discussed by representatives across all nations during almost every meeting of the ILC and often in meetings of the Governing Body⁹, however, Chinese statements on forced labour are rare. During the five years covered in this thesis, it happened only one time that a Chinese representative talked about forced labour in relation to his own country (Committee on Forced Labour [CFL], 2014). Even when forced labour is the main topic of the session, as it was in the 103rd session of the ICL, Chinese contributions do not mention it but rather focus on different topics (International Labour Conference, 2014d). They refer to human trafficking twice which is an aspect of forced labour but do not mention the term forced labour specifically (*ibid.*, pp. 93 & 193). In contrast, 66 other countries mention forced labour at least once during the session. An Indian worker representative refers to the term five times, not only in general terms, but also points to problems and developments specific to India. Like Chinese Government members, the Indian Government member focuses on other issues such as poverty alleviation, social security, employment and labour migration (*ibid.*, p.57). The US has two references to forced labour in its statements where the speaker elaborates briefly on forced labour (*ibid.*, p.61). Thus, compared to the two others, China’s quota is lower, however, not significantly. In addition, the statements of US and Indian speaker are not outstanding regarding their content, but they highlight that it is also important to notice what Chinese speakers do not say.

⁸ A graphical overview of Chinese, Indian and U.S.-American positions on the topics examined in this section can be found in Appendix 1.

Usually, forced labour is mentioned by Chinese speakers when the situation in other countries is the topic of the session. For example, in 2012, a Chinese representative in the ILC “stresse[s] that Myanmar had taken effective measures [...] to combat forced labour” (Committee on the Application of Standards [CAS], 2012, p. 11). He goes on claiming that the government’s efforts must be recognized and encouraged and that sanctions should be stopped (ibid.). A similar, but more elaborate statement can be found in the minutes of the 313th session of the Governing Body where a Chinese representative declares that “the adoption of the Ward or Village Tract Administration Act, the joint strategy to eliminate all forms of forced labour, the release of individuals imprisoned as a result of forced labour, the punishment of military personnel for the recruitment of minors and the extension of the Supplementary Understanding till February 2013 were all positive developments. The fact that the Government of Myanmar had adopted legislation and prosecuted perpetrators of forced labour was a sure sign of its commitment to eliminating the practice. The agenda of the ILC should therefore include a review of the situation” (Governing Body, 2012b, p. 21). At a meeting, later that year, a Chinese representative repeatedly points to the results achieved and expresses his hope that “the Governing Body would consider lifting all restrictions imposed on Myanmar” (Governing Body, 2012c, p. 35). Chinese representatives restate their Government’s appreciation of the efforts made throughout the examined timeframe (Governing Body, 2013a, 2014b), in 2015, they also support Myanmar’s request to postpone a decision on its case (Governing Body, 2015a) and stipulate that an extension of the memorandum was not necessary (Governing Body, 2015b, p. 35).

India’s representative in the ILC “expresse[s] his Government’s appreciation of the efforts made by the Government of Myanmar with regard to the observance of the Convention”, claims that “it was time for the international community to recognize the progress made to comply with the Convention”, and “urge[s] the ILO to reply positively to the endeavours taken by the Government of Myanmar [...]” (CAS, 2012, p. 10). During the 325th session of the Governing Body, an Indian speaker congratulates Myanmar on its progress although he has to acknowledge that some challenges remain (Governing Body, 2015b, p. 35). India’s statements in the ILC as well as the Governing

⁹ See, for example, Provisional Record 15, Report of the Committee for the Recurrent discussion on the Strategic Objective of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, International Labour Conference, 101st session, 2012 as an example

Body are generally positive; the distinctive point is that China request something specific whereas India calls for a positive reply without further specifying what that means. The US statement in the ILC starts positively as well, the speaker says that “[h]er Government welcomed and strongly endorsed these efforts and urged the Government [of Myanmar] to ensure that they were definitively achieved as soon as possible” (CAS, 2012, p.8). In contrast to the before mentioned statements, the speaker of the US goes on by highlighting that the real challenge will be to implement the new policies and laws in practice and questions whether they will be sustainable (ibid., p.8). The US speaker in the Governing Body keeps his statement short, requesting that “[t]he Government [of Myanmar] should now focus on imposing the penalties provided for in the new law” (Governing Body, 2012b, p. 30) and in 2015, explains that complaints are still numerous which is why he reminded the Burmese Government to keep forced labour on the agenda (Governing Body, 2015b, p. 35).

There are two more examples, one from 2015 and one from 2016, where Chinese speakers refer to forced labour in other countries. The first is related to Qatar where the Chinese representative highlights progress by the government and remarks that the time period stipulated by the ILO is too short for meaningful progress (Conference Committee on the Application of Standards [CCAS], 2015, p.134). In the Governing Body, Chinese representatives compliment the efforts taken and progress made, claiming that this indicates Qatar’s honest commitment to the improvement of working conditions of all workers. Neither a high-level tripartite mission nor a Commission of Inquiry is believed to be necessary, thus, the draft decision should be reconsidered and the issue removed from the agenda (Governing Body, 2015a, p. 30, 2016b, p. 52). Instead technical assistance should be continued (Governing Body, 2015a, p.31). India acknowledges the progress made and also claims that the timeframe is too narrow for meaningful change. However, the speaker also requests Qatar to complete the reform process without delay (CCAS, 2015). The country’s statement in the Governing Body is almost identical (Governing Body, 2015a, p. 31). In contrast, the US representative criticizes that “while the Government had pledged to address those issues, no significant progress has been made” (CCAS, 2015, p. 133) and further request faster reform. In the Governing Body, the US representative highlights serious problems

particularly related to the kafala system¹⁰. He therefore requests a high-level tripartite mission and, in contrast to the Chinese representative, supports the draft decision (Governing Body, 2015a, p. 31). Here again, the Chinese and India statements are comparable while the US statement is more critical.

The second example refers to Belarus where the Chinese speaker claims that the efforts taken are remarkable and that assistance should be provided. India's statement sounds similar; the US did not issue one. It needs to be noticed however that other countries do voice more critical statements. The Netherlands, for example, "called on the Government of Belarus to repeal or amend the provisions in its national legislation which could lead to situations amounting to forced labour" (CAS, 2016, p. 10).

The one time forced labour is specifically mentioned in relation to China concerns the country's "Yes" vote on the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention and on the Recommendation on Supplementary Measures (International Labour Conference, 2014b). These two documents are described by the Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Forced Labour as the much-needed update of one of the first ILO conventions to the 21st century. It offers a common framework for states to suppress all forms of forced labour and sets a new focus on measures regarding prevention, protection and compensation to complement the criminalization and prosecution of forced labour, resulting in a more comprehensive approach. This includes for example a provision which protects victims of forced labour from being punished for actions they were forced to execute (International Labour Conference, 2014a; Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour [SAP-CFL], 2014). China's behaviour in this respect was not limited to voting on the proposed instruments, but it also contributed to a questionnaire which the Office distributed to collect member State's opinions on content and scope (International Labour Office, 2014c). The country's vote in favour of the protocol as well as the recommendation does not mean, however, that it is automatically bound by the protocol. So far, it only paved the way for the new instruments with its "Yes" vote. The protocol is a binding instrument and therefore needs to be ratified. It is open only to ratification by those countries that have already ratified Convention No. 29. Thus, China will only be able to ratify the protocol after it ratified the convention and is therefore currently not bound by it. The recommendation

¹⁰ A system used to control migrant labour in countries of the Middle East. It requires unskilled, migrant workers to have an in-country sponsor responsible for their visa and legal status. It offers an easy

offers practical guidance and is not binding and does therefore not require ratification (International Labour Organization, 2016a; SAP-CFL, 2014).

This rare statement reads as follows: “his Government [the Chinese] was in support of adopting a Protocol and Recommendation. In China, the legislation about forced labour and its enforcement were aligned with the provisions of international labour standards. The Chinese Constitution made the State responsible for safeguarding human rights and the inviolability of its people’s freedom. There were clear legal provisions on the suppression of forced labour including penal sanctions” (CFL, 2014, p. 7). This statement is not special in how it is formulated, but in its rarity. Nonetheless, the Chinese representative sticks to the well-used pattern of linking the topic of forced labour with another country- he requests that the creation of new instruments should be based on lessons from history and in this turn refers to Japanese militarists using forced labour during WWII and the issue of comfort women (CFL, 2014). Compared to other Chinese statements made in relation to forced labour in a specific country this is a particularly strong and clear statement. It was further stated by a Chinese representative that his country supported the protocol and recommendation as “the suppression of forced labour was a consensus of the international community” (CFL, 2014, p. 64), however, he also reassured himself that the recommendation was not legally binding (CFL, 2014).

The Indian speaker claims that commitment to a binding protocol would undermine national legislation on forced labour and prevent flexibility. Being bound by Convention No. 29 was sufficient, she therefore advocates a non-binding recommendation to complement the convention (CFL, 2014, p. 7). The US representative “support[s] the adoption of a concise Protocol and a more detailed Recommendation that would provide guidance on measures of prevention, protection and compensation” (CFL, 2014, p. 6). This time, China and the US share the opinion of adopting both, a protocol and a recommendation whereas India clearly advocates the adoption of only a recommendation. It is further interesting to notice that, despite their different options, India as well as China seem to feel obliged to point out that their national legislation tackles forced labour.

opportunity to exploit workers, for example, by keeping their passport and is therefore constantly criticized by human rights activists.

3.1.2 Discrepancies

To detect discrepancies between what is said on forced labour and what is done, ILO reports are analysed. Starting in very general terms, an ILO report indicates that China belongs to a group of countries which “implement specific laws, policies, programmes or actions leading to improved application of Conventions, principles and rights in non-discrimination” (International Labour Office, 2012f, p. 87), a category which includes forced labour (*ibid.*). In another report, China indicates that it needs assistance to improve the understanding of public officials, employers, employees, and the public in general and to raise awareness regarding forced labour before ratification could be considered (Evaluation Office, 2015b). Some reports indicate progress. China changed a section of its Criminal Code which stipulates stronger penalties on forced labour and categorizes recruitment for forced labour as a criminal offence. Punishment applies to all individuals or organizations that force others to work by either violence, threat or restriction of personal freedom, that recruit forced labourers or transport them. The imprisonment can last between three to ten years (Governing Body, 2012a; International Labour Office, 2012a). An Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Women and Children was initiated in 2008 (International Labour Office, 2012b) and complemented by a campaign of the All-China Women’s Federation against human trafficking for forced labour (Governing Body, 2012a). China further participates in the Mekong sub regional cooperation in the anti-trafficking process, particularly aimed at children and women (International Labour Office, 2012b). In 2013, Chinese leaders decided to reform their system of re-education through labour, a step which the Office considers significant in the country’s path towards ratification of Convention No. 29 (International Labour Office, 2014b, p. 38).

It needs to be noticed that the majority of the listed actions does not refer specifically to forced labour, but to a sub-category of it. The Decent Work Country Programme for China does not refer to any specific targets related to forced labour either. The Evaluation Office only finds proof of action particularly targeting human trafficking (Evaluation Office, 2015a). This converges quite well with the statements, as human trafficking is referred to more often as to forced labour in direct relation to China. Thus, there do not seem to be major discrepancies between statements and actions; or at least the scarcity of both aggravates the detection of any. It needs to be kept in mind that as China did not ratify the relevant conventions and is not supervised on the matter of forced labour which explains the scarcity of reports.

3.1.3 Categorization

Thus, forced labour seems to be a topic which is neither prevalent in Chinese contributions to discussions nor in other documents about China. Most statements neither touch upon forced labour as a generally important topic nor to specifics related to the situation within the country. Most statements are issued in relation to the forced labour situation in other countries – they are mainly positive, acknowledging efforts and progress and usually end with a request in favour of the country in question. None of the contributions examined related to this matter are critical – which is in clear contrast to US statements. Chinese behaviour is characterized by low participation rates concerning the matter within the country and they only increase when the discussion is on the situation in other countries. To assume that China seeks to avoid the topic of forced labour is probably exaggerated, rather, it is likely that it tries to keep a low profile. The reason for this is likely to be that China is one of the few countries that has not ratified Convention No. 29 (International Labour Organization, 2016b) and therefore aims to escape potential pressure for ratification. According to Baccini and Koenig-Archibugi (2014), this is probable as the ILO constitutes a good environment for peer pressure as its framework puts states in a position where they have to justify to other member States why they do not ratify a particular convention. As the country is not under supervision, it cannot disregard the rules. Furthermore, China contributes to paving the way for an instrument which does not directly affect it yet as the country has not ratified the relevant convention. This shows that China does not act destructively by blocking development. Taking together all these aspects, China's behaviour regarding forced labour cannot be categorized as revisionist. Nevertheless, more engagement would be desirable to prove commitment to the matter and qualify the behaviour as truly status quo.

3.2 Child Labour

Like forced labour, child labour is a major topic of the ILO. Since 2000, the organization not only establishes policies and programmes but also measures the progress towards the elimination of child labour in the world. The newest report indicates that there are 168 million child labourers globally – they make up 11% of all children worldwide. Out of these children, about 85 million work under hazardous conditions, thus they work under circumstances which directly endanger their health, safety and moral development. In absolute terms, the largest number of child labourers

is found in the Asia-Pacific region. The sectors in which child labourers are mostly employed changed over time, but agriculture remained the most important. Other currently significant sectors are services and industry, mostly in the informal economy (Governance and Tripartism Department [GTD], 2013). Nonetheless, there is progress, especially since child labour concerns have been included in countries' development strategies (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour [IPEC], 2014a). In the time between 2000 and 2012, the number of child labourers declined by approximately one-third, about 78 million children. The number of girls was reduced by 40% and the number of boys by 25%. The number of those involved in hazardous work declined by 50%. In 2014, the ILO member states signed the Brasilia Declaration on Child Labour to reaffirm their commitment to eradicate child labour, specifically the worst forms by 2016. It stipulates that a comprehensive and coherent approach is necessary to target the socio-economic causes of child labour and acknowledges the efforts made by the ILO and IPEC in supporting states in their fight (Governing Body, 2014a; International Labour Organization, 2013). Despite the reassured commitment, it was already clear in 2013 that this goal could not be met (GTD, 2013).

3.2.1 Statements¹¹

In general, child labour is an issue which is widely referred to and introduced in speeches by representatives across all nations. However, in contrast to forced labour, not a single direct reference to child labour that can be found in Chinese statements issued in the ICL, during the examined time frame, not even regarding the situation in other countries. This is striking; however, it needs to be noticed that the same applies for India and the US – no statements in relation to child labour have been found in the available sitting records. One factor might be that during the examined timeframe, no session of the ILC was specifically determined to child labour whereas the 103rd session was partially dedicated to forced labour. There are three statements in protocols of the Committee on the Application of Standards and of the Governing Body. In the committee, the Chinese spokesperson points to an adopted measures, namely “a high-level seminar on the elimination of child labour with representatives of half of all the Chinese provinces and cities” (CAS, 2013, p. 23) which included sessions on topics such as the legal framework and labour inspection. At this seminar, a Chinese minister

¹¹ Due the scarcity of Chinese statements, there is no comparison with Indian and US-American statements in this section as well as no table in the appendix.

officially affirmed for the first time that child labour was a challenge (International Labour Office, 2013a) – an affirmation which is not reflected in Chinese representatives' statements. In the Governing Body, a Chinese speaker commends the creation of a complaint mechanism for the recruitment of child soldiers by the Burmese Government (Governing Body, 2014b, p. 28). In 2015, a representative says that “it was a major responsibility of the ILO and its member States to protect workers from unacceptable forms of work” (Governing Body, 2015a, p. 59) which is not a direct reference to child labour; however, it can be attributed to it as well as to forced labour. Thus, statements of Chinese representatives on child labour are even more scarce than on forced labour.

3.2.2 Discrepancies

China has ratified both relevant conventions, Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment and work and Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour, both conventions listed as fundamental conventions (International Labour Organization, 2017j). It is therefore subject to the supervisory mechanism of the ILO – this means that there are documents available which provide information about Chinese behaviour in the ILO in relation to child labour. These reports evaluate efforts taken as well as insufficiencies detected. In general, Chinese labour law forbids the employment of people under the age of 16, for some specific jobs mentioned in state regulations also for those under the age of 18 (Casale & Zhu, 2013). In the Factory Law of 1929, activities are listed which are prohibited to child labourers, most of them belonging to the category of hazardous labour. Other regulations define which work is prohibited for workers between 16 and 18. Nine years of compulsory education is also enshrined in the law (IPEC, 2014b). These laws offer a starting point, nonetheless, there are insufficiencies related to the laws which are illustrated in the next paragraph. Despite these insufficiencies, there is some progress, for example, the All-China Women's Federation's campaign helping children under 16 to finish their compulsory education and those over 16 to find decent work (Governing Body, 2012a) and Chinese involvement in a joint project of the ILO and IPEC which fights against trafficking of children and women (International Labour Office, 2012b).

Deficiencies are numerous. Children of rural migrants are particularly likely to get into child labour as under the hukou household registration system, their parents are not allowed to register themselves as permanent residents and consequently, their children

do not get access to the education system. In the rare cases schools admit unregistered children, their parents are required to pay a compensation fee which makes schooling too expensive to afford. In either case, child work is likely to result (Evaluation Office, 2015a). The same applies for children of ethnic minorities, refugee children and children of asylum seekers (IPEC, 2014b). Another problem is that Chinese prisons employ re-education through labour strategies which subject children under 18 to hard labour (ibid.). In 2013, Chinese leaders decided to reform the system, a step that is considered crucial by the International Labour Office (International Labour Office, 2014b, p. 38). It is further assumed that the Chinese apprenticeship system is abused to make children under minimum age work (International Labour Office, 2012c). In addition, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations worries about children under the age of 18 who are engaged in hazardous types of work through work-study programmes. These are programmes where pupils are sent to work by their schools to generate funding. Employers tend to abuse these programmes to justify child work; pupils often work in labour intensive, unskilled, low-paid jobs over long time periods (Evaluation Office, 2015a; International Labour Office, 2015a). Moreover, it is assumed that numerous of the worst forms of child labour exist in China, including forced labour, prostitution, trafficking and hazardous work such as in fireworks shops, brick kilns, and glass-making workshops (International Labour Organization, 2005; IPEC, 2014b).

Tackling child labour in China is difficult for two major reasons: First, efficient labour inspections are undermined by collusion between inspectors and companies which prevents thorough examination and second, unsystematic data collection (Evaluation Office, 2015a; International Labour Office, 2015a). The Evaluation Office finds that, concerning available statistics, data is lacking and not transparent (Evaluation Office, 2015a; IPEC, 2014b). It is therefore necessary that the Chinese Government provides sufficient up-to-date data about child labourers in China – it is assumed that the lack of data does not result from the fact that there is no child labour in China as the Government might prefer, but rather from the Government's incapability or willingness to provide data. Reliable data is needed as a basis for policies (IPEC, 2014b) as well as for a coherent strategy which is currently lacking and thus undermines the efforts taken over the years (Evaluation Office, 2015a). It is further claimed that despite the beforementioned efforts against human trafficking, local authorities mostly failed to implement the programmes effectively (International Labour Office, 2015a). Thanks to

the reports, it becomes obvious that China's dealing with the issue of child labour contains many deficiencies. It is however impossible to detect discrepancies due to the outstanding scarcity of statements.

3.2.3 Categorization

Chinese behaviour on child labour is almost non-existent when only considering contributions to sittings, the participation rate is low. In addition, ILO documents show that tackling child labour in China proves difficult and that some of the problems are clearly related to the Government. Nonetheless, these reports show as well that there are policies and programmes in China as well as attempts to address the insufficiencies of the law. China does not actively counteract ILO efforts related to child labour, but it is also true that activities in that matter do not seem to be a priority concern. What matters is that there is some action which indicates that China operates within the ILO framework, even though it does so slowly. No destructive tendencies have been found, thus, Chinese behaviour concerning child labour is not categorized as revisionist. Nevertheless, as regarding forced labour, increased engagement with the matter is desirable.

3.3 Important issues, formulations, structure and a strategy

As forced labour and child labour do not seem to be among the prioritized issues of Chinese representatives, it is examined in the following which issues are regularly mentioned instead. This helps to understand which issues are crucial to China and potentially shed light on the motivation of Chinese behaviour. In addition, terms, formulations and structure used are examined to determine whether they are used strategically and whether they point to either revisionist or status quo behaviour.

3.3.1 Compliance and Commitment

The first major issues reoccurring regularly and therefore examined in the light of Chinese behaviour is compliance with the ILO's rules, norms, and principles and the country's commitment to the organization. In the ILO, compliance is monitored by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, the International Labour Conference Committee on Freedom of Association and the International Labour Conference Committee on the Application of Standards. Regular reports about the implementation of standards have to be submitted for inspection (IPEC, 2012).

3.3.1.1 Statements

In sittings, Chinese representatives regularly request compliance with ratified ILO conventions, stipulating that “member States were under a serious obligation to fully implement ratified Conventions [...]” (CAS, 2016, p.11). However, these statements are not only limited to remind fellow members of their duties, but often also serve to remind the ILO of what it can do for its members. For example, a speaker claims that “countries that had ratified ILO Conventions should implement the provisions of those Conventions. [...] the ILO was available to assist countries in overcoming their difficulties regarding the implementation of Conventions and countries could ask for technical assistance” (CCAS, 2015, p. 202) or similarly, “[i]t was the obligation of ratifying countries to implement international labour Conventions. In the meantime, the ILO needed to provide the necessary technical support to its member States for the application of standards” (CAS, 2016, p. 59). In line with Chinese interest, representatives only ever point to the implementation of ratified conventions, but never to the ratification of new conventions. Thus, a focus is set on already ratified conventions, presumably because China does not want the pressure to be increased on itself to come to terms with the ratification of several conventions, most notably the Forced Labour Convention No. 29. The peer pressure argument by Baccini and Koenig-Archibugi (2014) referred to in the section of forced labour applies here as well.

In addition, a Chinese speaker claims that “[t]he ILO should work to identify and assist in resolving any inconsistencies between national law and practice and fundamental Conventions” (CRDSOFPRW, 2012, p. 31). Others acknowledge the significance of the Committee on the Application of Standards and expresses China’s support for the ILO standards supervisory mechanism, the Director-General and the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (International Labour Conference, 2014c, p. 12). Dispute settlement is another interesting topic in that matter. China clearly prefers tripartite dialogue over referral of cases to the ICJ or the establishment of an in-house tribunal, however, “if recourse to the ICJ was supported by the majority, they would not object” (Governing Body, 2014c, p. 24).

Even though China has not yet managed to ratify any of the two forced labour conventions and progress to do so remains limited, it contributes actively to the development of other international standards initiated by the ILO, inter alia, the Maritime Labour Convention. In 2012, a speaker in the Governing Body indicates that

“[t]he Government of China was ready to work with the stakeholders to promote the ratification and implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (Governing Body, 2012b, p. 99). A year later, it was reaffirmed that preparations for the ratification were in process (Governing Body, 2013b, p. 120). In November 2015, the convention was ratified and the Chinese spokesperson affirmed that laws and institutional arrangements are adopted to implement it (Governing Body, 2016a; International Labour Organization, 2017j). Chinese representatives also participate actively in discussions on the promotion of Convention No. 188 on the Work in Fishing, even though it has not yet ratified it yet (International Labour Organization, 2016b). They work on the ratification process which is important given China’s number of fleets and fishers they employ (Sectoral Activities Department [SAD], 2013).

Commitment to the ILO is another topic which reoccurs regularly in speeches and becomes visible when the country’s representatives speak about the ILO’s role in the international system. Among others, there are statements such as “we hope that the ILO will play a greater role in the future” and “enhance the management and administration of the ILO” (International Labour Conference, 2012a, p. 7) that call for an extended influence of the ILO (International Labour Conference, 2013). Commitment becomes further visible in statements such as “China calls for joint efforts and strengthened cooperation from all constituents. The Chinese Government is willing to and will continue to fulfil its commitment and make its contribution” (International Labour Conference, 2012a, p. 8) and “China supported the drafting of an international instrument [on the transition from informal to formal economy] and was ready to strengthen technical cooperation with the ILO on that matter. [...] China was available to share its own experiences, particularly with regard to measures to provide informal workers with training to help them access the formal economy [...]” (Committee on Transitioning from the Informal Economy [CTIE], 2014, p. 10) where Chinese speakers offer the country’s expertise and at the same time call on other members to do so as well. Similar statements are voiced in the Governing Body offering international cooperation under the ILO framework regarding employment and protectionism (Governing Body, 2013a, p. 152, 2014c, p. 13).

3.3.1.2 Discrepancies

In contrast to the issues of forced and child labour, compliance and commitment are priority issues for Chinese speakers measured not only by the frequency they refer to it,

but also by the consistency of the content of their statements. They show support for the ILO system and its supervisory mechanism not only with words in their statements, but also through actions, by actively participating, fulfilling duties under supervision and by reminding others of their duty. The International Labour Office notes that China contributes to the ratification of international standards, for example, by setting up “a Cabinet-level Committee to fast-track the ratification of fundamental ILO Conventions” (International Labour Office, 2014b, p. 38) and adopting new labour legislation and employment policies which are based on customized ILO support and consider at least 50% of the Office’s recommendations (ibid.) It has further commenced reforms of its judicial and labour dispute settlement mechanisms that impact the ILO’s FPRW which includes inter alia forced and child labour (International Labour Office, 2012a). Furthermore, throughout the examined time period, China always provided all reports requested under the supervisory mechanism (International Labour Office, 2012d, 2012e, 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2015a, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b) and there have only been three cases so far which have been examined by the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards, none of them within the examined time period (International Labour Office, 2016b). These are further signs of compliance because cases that are considered by the supervisory organs as crucially disregarding ILO standards, are examined by them.

It thus seems that China is an active member of the ILO, engaged within the ILO as well as actively implementing ILO policies and programmes in the country. Based on the available documents, China mostly complies with the ILO’s norms, rules and principles and is committed to the organization. Nevertheless, there is one apparent inconsistency in Chinese compliance and commitment which relates to the Chinese non-ratification of the Forced Labour Convention No. 29. The ILO champions universal ratification of the Forced Labour Convention as sign of ILO’s relevance and effectiveness in the international system (CRDSOFPRW, 2012) and China advocates the extension of the ILO’s role in the international system. Nonetheless, since 1930, China has not managed to ratify the convention and therefore blocks the Forced Labour Convention from becoming a shining signboard of ILO effectiveness. There are thus discrepancies between statements and actions, however, on average, the enthusiasm expressed in the statements for compliance and commitment is roughly met by Chinese actions based on documents of the supervisory organs.

3.3.1.3 Categorization

There are no signs of dissatisfaction, of disregard of rules, in contrast, Chinese representatives show high participation rates on the issues and actively advocate the norm of compliance. Concerning these issues, words and actions mostly match. It is additionally remarkable that despite Chinese general aversion against international courts¹² and their jurisdiction (Tao, 2015), China's representatives signal that they would not object the referral of a case to the ICJ if the majority of members decides so. All these factors indicate status quo behaviour as there are no signs of destructive behaviour or desire for a fundamental change of rules. A reason why compliance is a topic so often referred to might be that China wants other member States to have a good opinion about it (Kent, 1999a, p. 118). One cannot be sure that there are no revisionist tendencies at all, as the intentions behind Chinese behaviour in the ILO are unknown, however, there is no evidence so far for revisionist behaviour.

3.3.2 Reform

3.3.2.1 Statements

A related topic which reoccurs in Chinese statements is the reform of the international system in general as well as of the ILO specifically. In the 101st session of the ICL, a Chinese representative asked developing countries to raise their voices in an effort to establish an international order which is more fair and based on equality (International Labour Conference, 2012b).

Chinese representatives welcome the Director-General's plan to internally reform the ILO, even though progress is believed to be too slow (Governing Body, 2013a, 2014b). During the 102nd session, ILO promotion was emphasized to increase the efficiency of the organization (International Labour Conference, 2013) and Chinese spokespersons actively propose improvements. For instance, related to a new set-up of discussions and meetings which should contribute to efficiency and effectiveness (Governing Body, 2012b), calling for a reform of the requirements for the denunciation of a convention, as they consider the applying rules outdated and overly strict and therefore discouraging wider ratification (*ibid.*), or requesting measures to improve the ILO programme evaluation (*ibid.*). In addition, they encourage a faster reform of the

¹² Consider, for example, the Chinese decision to reject the ruling of an international tribunal in The Hague on Chinese behaviour in the South China Sea as invalid and not binding: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/13/world/asia/south-china-sea-hague-ruling-philippines.html?_r=0

ILC, proposing a two-weeks conference from 2014 onwards (Governing Body, 2013b, p. 12).

They further advocate a reorganisation of resources and expertise towards the Asian Pacific which they believe to be underrepresented when considering that 60% of the world's population live there (Governing Body, 2012c) and thus criticize the number of targets suggested for the region as insufficient (Governing Body, 2013a, 2014b). Proposals included a strengthening of regional institutes (Governing Body, 2012c) and of the South-South Triangular Cooperation through which the Chinese government intends to share its experiences on employment promotion and expansion of social security with the region (Governing Body, 2013a), and the wish that the ILO website be translated into Chinese, Arabic and Russian, the three remaining UN official languages to reach a wider audience (Governing Body, 2014b, p. 57, 2014c, p. 65, 2015a, p. 121). It is further suggested that the staff should be diverse and represent all regions (Governing Body, 2013a, 2013a, p. 118), especially at the Director's level (Governing Body, 2013b, p. 54). Underrepresentation of nationals from the Asian Pacific should be counteracted by eliminating the prerequisite of fluency in two ILO working languages – in the Chinese point of view, this precondition hinders to attract experts from all over the world, particularly from developing states (Governing Body, 2014b, p. 161). The ILO should offer technical assistance to counteract the underrepresentation (Governing Body, 2014c, p. 145).

3.3.2.2 Discrepancies

The current Director-General started a campaign for the internal reform of the ILO, a project in which Chinese representatives are actively involved. They do not limit themselves to requesting reform, but actively propose amendments. Therefore, there are no observable discrepancies between statements and actions.

3.3.2.3 Categorization

Desire for reform is easily interpreted as revisionist behaviour, but it is not all that easy. What matters is the dimension of the desire for change and whether it comes with a disregard of existing rules or not. Chinese active involvement in the reform process is not a sign that China seeks to overthrow the rules of the organization and set them up completely different. It rather shows that the country is actively involved in a process that happens within the ILO framework and which has not been initiated by the China but the Director-General, therefore, China does not disregard existing rules. As any

other country, China seeks to benefit from its membership in the ILO and thus contributes to its reform to improve its position (Kahler, 2013). Schweller and Pu (2011) would categorize this behaviour as limited-aims-revisionist whereas Xiao (2015) calls it reform-minded status quo. This shows how blurry the lines between status quo and revisionist are. Regarding this issue, Xiao's categorization is followed, as Chinese behaviour does not aim for fundamental change but rather represents a desire for adjustment to changing realities in the international system which were long needed.

3.3.3 Employment and Development

3.3.3.1 Statements

Other important topics frequently used in Chinese statements are employment, economic and social development. In 2012, a representative indicates that the government "adopted a prioritized employment strategy for its economic and social development, keeping a balance between trade and industrial development" (International Labour Conference, 2012c). In a meeting of the Governing Body, a Chinese speaker claims "that the most important job for the ILO was to assist its Members in creating jobs, promoting decent work, establishing a social protection floor and strengthening tripartite cooperation" (Governing Body, 2012b, p. 153). Several months later, a Chinese speaker reaffirms the need to focus on social protection, productivity and youth employment and adds the promotion of green jobs (Governing Body, 2012c). The focus on employment and development reappears in 2013 as a representative uses the following key terms: "development", "new employment strategy", "proactive employment strategy" (International Labour Conference, 2013, p. 47), "job-rich development strategy" and "youth employment" (ibid., p. 48). The focus on employment and social protection is reaffirmed in the 317th session of the Governing Body and complemented with youth employment and migrant workers (Governing Body, 2013a). Employment remains a major topic in 2014 as well (Governing Body, 2014c, p. 89; International Labour Conference, 2014d). In 2015, the transition from the informal to the formal economy, the development of medium-sized enterprises and social security are significant topics (Committee on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy [CTIFE], 2015) as well as green development (Governing Body, 2015b). In 2016, job generation, social security and promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work are on the agenda as well as a reinforced development cooperation (Committee for the Social Justice Declaration [CSJD], 2016).

In another contribution, the significance of “active employment policies” and “access to high quality jobs” is reaffirmed (Committee on Decent Work in Global Supply Chains [CDWGSC], 2016, p. 10).

3.3.3.2 Discrepancies

This focus does not only become obvious through the analysis of sitting recordings, but also in ILO reports. The ILO’s Evaluation Office notes as well that employment and social security are high priority topics for the Chinese leadership; a lot of work has been done in this regard, however, development has not been equal or sustainable and a substantial mismatch between the demand and supply of labour continues to exist. To reach the goal of full employment, various measures targeting rural migrants, the youth, university graduates and other disadvantaged were initiated. Challenges remain nonetheless, mostly concerning the implementation of laws and policies, the creation of truly effective labour inspections and the elimination of discrimination on various grounds (Evaluation Office, 2015a). The strong emphasis on employment, development and related issues is not yet successfully mirrored in actions and results. There is therefore a discrepancy between words and actions. However, by constantly referring to it, Chinese representatives keep the issues on the agenda which is an important precondition for improved actions.

3.3.3.3 Categorization

The emphasis on issues related to employment and development reaffirms the hypothesis that Chinese behaviour in the ILO is guided by economic interests. This suggests that China focuses on this particular section of the ILO framework while others such as the abolition of forced and child labour are not among the priority subjects. All these issues are part of the ILO framework and there is no sign of disregard of rules, therefore, the Chinese behaviour is categorized as status quo. If, however, this emphasis would prove to be an attempt to substantially change the agenda and decrease labour rights prominence within the ILO framework, then, Chinese behaviour would be labelled revisionist. So far, there is no evidence for this assumption, but the possibility needs to be kept in mind.

3.3.4 Trade Unions, Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining, and Tripartism

3.3.4.1 Statements

Another important topic are Chinese trade unions (International Labour Conference, 2012b) and connected to that the issues of collective bargaining and freedom of association. A speaker indicates that China is “steadily promoting collective bargaining and collective agreements” (International Labour Conference, 2012a, p. 7), and that his country “was grateful for [...] cooperation on promoting collective bargaining” (CRDSOFPRW, 2012, p. 48). Chinese representatives further claim that “collective bargaining should be actively promoted” (ibid., p. 48) and assure the other member States that “Chinese trade unions, in pursuit of peace, development, cooperation and workers’ rights, are becoming actively involved in ILO activities” (International Labour Conference, 2014d, p. 93). Regarding trade unions, pathetic statements such as “Chinese trade union will, as always, stand by the side of the working people around the world, hold high the banner of peace [...]” (International Labour Conference, 2012b, p. 8) occur regularly.

A connected topic which is regularly referred to is the principle of tripartism - a principle which makes the ILO a unique UN Specialized Agency. During the 101st ILC session, tripartite consultation and cooperation are highlighted as significantly important (International Labour Conference, 2012a). Tripartism is often referred to as being a substantial feature in the process towards achieving the goals of the ILO as the tripartite constituents are supposed to contribute to cooperation through dialogue (International Labour Conference, 2014c, p. 12) and a Chinese speaker once commended “the Director-General for his steadfast adherence to the spirit of tripartism[...]” (Governing Body, 2012b, p. 51). In addition, Chinese representatives argue that “dispute resolution was best achieved through tripartite discussion [...] he] was concerned that referral to the ICJ would take the matter outside of ILO hands and could destroy the good practice of tripartism” (Governing Body, 2014c, p. 21). It is not surprising that referral to the ICJ is not the preferred option, it is, however, interesting that tripartism is the preferred alternative as it is questionable whether it actually exists in China. It is further claimed that tripartite dialogue is the means to find solutions to problems connected with the right to strike (Governing Body, 2014c, p. 32).

3.3.4.2 Discrepancies

Apart from the statements, progress and deficiencies are reported in ILO reports. For example that the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) trained about 5,000 trade union officials and collective bargaining instructors during 2011 (Governing Body, 2012a). It is further reported, however, that due to a lack of institutional capacity of responsible state organs and lack of social dialogue on the respective principle and right, the progress concerning freedom of association and collective bargaining stagnated (Governing Body, 2012a). The Committee on Freedom of Association finds that several provisions of trade union law are not in compliance with the fundamental principle of freedom of association and thus called on the Chinese Government to adapt the respective provisions, but violations continue (Governing Body, 2016b, p. 59). A Chinese spokesperson replies that further inquiries would be carried out, however, he is convinced that the case in question is unrelated to worker's rights and should therefore not be dealt with as a case before the CFA, even more so as the involved persons have been convicted by the responsible legal organ (Governing Body, 2016b, p. 61). The reply shows that China does not agree with the committee, the representative's reply sounds even a bit defiant, illustrating that China's interpretation of rights linked to the freedom of association differ from those of the ILO. Moreover, China did neither ratify Convention No. 87 nor No. 98 which are the relevant conventions for freedom of association and collective bargaining and the issue is not adequately reflected in the country's list of desired goals (Evaluation Office, 2015a).

The focus on freedom of association, collective bargaining, trade unions and tripartism is therefore interesting. Even more so as all these issues are usually listed in relation to problems of workers in China. It is, for example, questionable whether tripartism actually exists in China, as the ACFTU is closely affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This is contrary to the principle of tripartism which stipulates that the Government, the workers' representatives, and the employers' bring in their differing, sometimes also contrasting opinions representing their respective groups and act independently from each other. Due to the unitary character of the ACFTU, this does not really apply to China. Furthermore, independent trade unions develop slowly. In principle, the Chinese Constitution protects the freedom of association and therefore, the Chinese leadership claims that it does not reject the principle. However, for long, trade unions were only allowed to be established after authorization and under the control of the CCP which implies that Chinese workers were deprived of their freedom

of association as they were not allowed to create or join a trade union independently. The problem was that trade union activities had to be carried out “according to the law” which heavily restricted the actual freedom of association. Laws have been adjusted, they now stipulate that trade union activities are to be carried out autonomously and independently, but still in accordance with the law. High obstacles to the establishment of a trade union remain and until freedom of association is not guaranteed to all Chinese citizens, the country does not comply with the norm (Kent, 1999a). Thus, despite the emphasis on trade unions, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, and tripartism in Chinese statements, it becomes visible that there are substantial discrepancies between words and actions regarding the issues. The content of the statements still must be achieved in reality.

3.3.4.3 Categorization

Regarding the examined issues, there is more talking than action. The discrepancies between statements and reports are obvious. The different interpretations of freedom of association can be interpreted as a sign of dissatisfaction and be an indicator for an underlying wish for change. However, it needs to be kept in mind here that this incident of disagreement happened once in the examined timeframe. In addition, the Chinese representative assures the committee that his country will re-examine the case. Thus, categorizing Chinese behaviour as revisionist would be a rash decision; it should rather be kept in mind as a potential revisionist tendency. It is moreover remarkable that, despite the deficiencies, these issues continuously find their way into Chinese statements and thus indicate the willingness to deal with them within the ILO framework with rather indicates status quo behaviour.

3.3.5 “China is a developing country.”

3.3.5.1 Statements

During the examination of sitting protocols, it became visible that Chinese representatives use formulations specifically tailored to their country’s position in the international system. One of these is the reference to China as a developing country. It is used in several sittings of the 101st session of the ICL in 2012. One representative requests that “the voice of developing countries [...] should be raised [...]” (International Labour Conference, 2012b, p. 8), two others describe China consistently as a “large developing country” (International Labour Conference, 2012a, p. 7, 2012a,

p. 16). The same can be observed in the 102nd session in statements such as “China remained a developing country” (CAS, 2013, p. 23) and “the largest developing country in the world” (International Labour Conference, 2013, p. 92). A similar reference is voiced during the 103rd sitting where a Chinese representative acted as the spokesperson of developing countries requesting “assistance [that] should be provided to developing countries” (International Labour Conference, 2014d, p. 93). Likewise, Chinese representatives in meetings of the Governing Body portray China as a developing country (Governing Body, 2012b).

There is further consistency as Chinese representatives do not restrain themselves to repeatedly calling their country a developing state, but also regularly request the ILO to adjust their policies and programmes to country situations. It should consider the “diverse historical, cultural, legal, judicial and governance environments” (CRDSOFPRW, 2012, p. 48), pursue its policies “in accordance with organizations and resources of each member State” (ibid, p.61) and “to the extent of their resources and specific circumstances” (ibid, p.62), criticizing that a one-size-fits-all approach is not applicable and reaffirming that the circumstances within countries must be considered (ibid, p.67). There is consistency in this respect as well, as for example in 2016, a Chinese representative claims that “differences among national contexts and each country’s respective capacity to implement standards should be taken into consideration” (CDWGSC, 2016, p. 10). Comparable statements are issued in the Governing Body, such as “due to the differences in economic development, history and culture of the member States, principles and fundamental rights varied from one country to another. The ILO should concentrate on [...] the real needs of its member States” (Governing Body, 2012c, p. 24) or calling on the ILO to “pay more attention to the economic and employment situation in developing countries” (ibid., p. 147). Chinese statements on the issue are not limited to highlighting different levels of development and circumstances but also point to the disadvantages it would have if a single set of indicators was applied – resources would be wasted for measuring instead of being used for solving real problems (Governing Body, 2013a). Another example concerns the South-South Triangular Cooperation, a programme to which China donates substantial amounts of money and which it requests to be “based on the demand of the recipient countries for assistance with initiatives that needed to be implemented locally” (Governing Body, 2012b, p. 74) as well as on country ownership and capacity building (Governing Body, 2014c, p. 107). It is further argued that even though China

contributes to the SSTC, developed countries are mainly responsible (Governing Body, 2013b, p. 96).

3.3.5.2 Discrepancies

It has been elaborated in the literature on China's rise that China is keen on preserving its special status as a developing country which means participating in and benefiting from the international system while taking over less responsibilities than the developed countries (Bergsten, 2008; Kahler, 2013, p. 721; Patrick, 2010). It is disputed whether China still belongs to the category of developing countries – while developed states consider this behaviour free-riding, China defines it as economic justice for a country where substantial parts of the population still live in poverty (Kahler, 2013, p. 727). The discussed formulation used in Chinese statements is therefore in accord with literature on China's rise. However, none of the examined reports proves that China's advocacy of its developing country status has led to a matching behaviour, thus, rejecting to take over responsibilities or fulfil tasks.

3.3.5.3 Categorization

Chinese engagement for developing countries and the advocacy of country ownership, differentiated approaches and indicators matching a country's situation and the denial of a one-size-fits-all approach happen within the framework of the ILO. No destructive tendencies have been detected. Similar to the section on reform, Chinese behaviour indicates interest in reform but within the system and can be considered as the legitimate attempt of a rapidly developing country to adjust the international system to new realities which means *inter alia* that developing countries assume a greater voice *vis-à-vis* the developed, mostly Western states. As most countries, China seeks to get most out of their participation and it does so by trying to improve developing countries' position. Thus, the general advocacy of differentiated approaches and engagement for developing countries can be categorized as status quo. The insistence on a developing country status for China, however, can be interpreted as a rejection to take over responsibilities and a sign of dissatisfaction. If words were followed by actions and China rejected to take over responsibilities or fulfil tasks, this would indicate destructive behaviour and thus be categorized as revisionist. So far, no destructive behaviour appeared in the reports which is why Chinese behaviour in this matter is categorized as reform-minded status quo following Xiao (2015). Again, it is important to notice that Schweller and Pu would label the same behaviour limited-aims-revisionist.

3.3.6 “Harmony”

Another word which is specific to Chinese statements is harmony or harmonious, stemming from Confucian philosophical underpinnings of the Chinese world view (Yaqing, 2010). Representatives frequently call for “harmonious labour relations”, “social harmony and progress” (International Labour Conference, 2012a, p. 16), “harmonizing industrial relations” (CRDSOFPRW, 2012, p. 48), “[h]armonious industrial relations” (International Labour Conference, 2013, p. 92), and “more harmonious labour relations” (CDWGSC, 2016, p. 10). It is noteworthy that the term harmony is usually connected with economic terms. Referring back to the discrepancies illustrated in relation to the issues of employment and development, it can be said that harmonious labour relations have not been achieved yet which shows that there are discrepancies between the regular use of the word and its actual achievement. Harmony is a key concept in Chinese rhetoric which differentiates Chinese statements from others in the ILO and it is a concept which is rarely used in Western economic thought. However, Chinese statements mostly only refer to it but do not advocate it as an alternative to established norms. The use of the term does therefore not indicate behaviour opposing the organizations’ rules and norms or a desire for fundamental change, thus, no sign of revisionist behaviour.

3.3.7 “The China dream”

Another interesting term used by Chinese speakers is that of the Chinese dream. It is a term which Xi Jinping actively promoted and very vaguely defined as the great rejuvenation of China. It further connects with the idea of a Chinese international relations paradigm which will make the world a better place (Do, 2015). The Chinese worker representative refers to this concept by saying that “China is striving to promote world peace and development and to realize the dream of ‘revival of the nation’ [... there is] the need to respect labour, contribute to workers’ welfare and put faith in the working class to achieve “the China dream” (International Labour Conference, 2013, p. 164). In 2014, a speaker refers to the “dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” and further explains that “[t]he Chinese dream is connected with the dream of the working class everywhere” (International Labour Conference, 2014d, p. 93). Some scholars would interpret the referral to the Chinese dream as a clear sign of revisionist tendencies, seeking to set up a world order created along its own ideas. Terms such as revival of the Chinese nation might raise fears, especially with its neighbours in the

region. However, the term Chinese dream so far lacks a concrete definition and aspects it builds on. It is not clear what the term refers to and what the concept includes, thus, its implications for the international system cannot be assumed. Within the ILO context, references to the term are not linked with requests for fundamental change, thus, so far, they are not connected to actual revisionist claims.

3.3.8 Structure¹³

Not only the use of specific terms characterises Chinese statements and thus behaviour but also the way the statements are structured. Like the statements made regarding forced labour in other countries, statements concerning other issues in other countries follow the same pattern. They are mostly positive, usually do not criticize and request the ILO to do something for the country in question. Some of these statements will be elaborated on here and where possible compared with statements of Indian and US-American representatives.

Regarding the Convention on the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise in Algeria, a Chinese representative says that “[h]is Government hoped that the Committee would recognize the commitment and appreciate the efforts of the Government of Algeria [...]” (CCAS, 2015, p. 152) and further requested continued ILO assistance which would contribute to complete the reform and enable Algeria to fully comply with the Convention on Freedom of Association (ibid.). The US representative, in contrast, “recall[s] that Algerian trade unionists had been subjected to various forms of intimidation and that many of the incidents that had been previously discussed in the Committee had not been remedied” (ibid., p.151). He further emphasizes that “the Government often interfered with and prohibited meetings and demonstrations” (ibid., p.151) and requests “the Algerian Government to undertake serious reform [...]” (ibid., p.151). India did not issue a statement. Thus, Chinese and US-American statements are obviously different; the US statement is more critical, listing incidents where the freedom of association and right to organise were violated and requesting action from the Government in question whereas the Chinese statement reaffirms the efforts of the Algerian Government and requests the ILO to do something.

Concerning the same convention in Belarus, a Chinese Government spokesperson “congratulate[s] the Government on its close cooperation with the ILO

¹³ For an overview of the statements analysed in this section, indicating the positions of China, India and the U.S., see Appendix 2.

and on its progress in implementing the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry [...] It was still necessary to apply ratified Conventions. The Government had shown a willingness to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, and the ILO should Belarus with technical assistance to enhance its capability to apply the Convention” (CCAS, 2015, p. 166). Here again, the statement as such is rather positive and request something for the country in question; to some extent it is different, however, as the second sentence contains a slight criticism concerning Belarus’ application of the ratified convention. The US, in turn, “regrett[s] that, despite the fact that this case has been discussed by the Committee several times over the years, the repression of independent trade unions continued” (ibid., p.164) and is thus, substantially more critical than China. The Indian speaker emphasizes that “recent developments were clear proof of the Government’s willingness to address seriously the issues raised by the Commission of Inquiry and the Committee of Experts, and these efforts deserved due recognition from the ILO supervisory body” (ibid., p.165). India does not only support the Belarussian Government, it also criticizes the ILO and in addition it questions whether the repeated discussion of the case is necessary or due to political considerations, which clearly contrasts the US statement.

The same convention is also under discussion concerning the situation in Bangladesh. The Chinese representative says that “the Government had made sincere efforts to fulfil its obligations under the Convention, these efforts needed to be recognized and supported with technical assistance of the Office” (CAS, 2016, p. 25). India’s statement is similarly positive as its speaker lists the efforts taken by the Government and does not voice any criticism. The US representative, in contrast, criticizes “a lack of progress” and illustrates steps which still needed to be taken (ibid., p. 24). The same issue is at stake regarding Kazakhstan, where the Chinese speaker “noted the improvements made [...], its political will to cooperate with the ILO to actively address the relevant issues and to formulate laws that were in line with international labour standards. It was the obligation of ratifying countries to implement international labour Conventions. In the meantime, the ILO needed to provide the necessary technical support to its member States on the application of standards” (ibid., p. 59). Again, the statement is generally positive. However, China does not only claim something from the ILO along its pattern, but also reminds the country in question of its obligation. In contrast, the US statement is much more critical as it claims that “[t]he Government [of Kazakhstan] had given no indication that it was taking the tragedy

seriously and inexplicably, charges against oil workers where still pending. The new laws adopted in 2014 and 2015 did not provide appropriate solutions and workers' rights continued to be undermined and restricted" (ibid., p. 58). India did not comment.

Regarding Malaysia and Zimbabwe, the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention is under discussion. In a joint statement of inter alia the ASEAN members and China, the speaker "urge[s] the Committee to grant ample time to Malaysia to conduct such a substantial exercise" (CAS, 2016, p. 110). The Indian representative voices support for labour legislation reforms and "request[s] the Committee to fully take into account the detailed information provided by the Government and its continued commitment to strengthening the compliance of its labour laws with the Convention" (ibid., p. 112). Regarding the situation in Zimbabwe, the Chinese representative acknowledges that Zimbabwe's Government implemented the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and appreciated the progress. He further explained that "the member State needed to shoulder the responsibilities that arose from the Conventions which they had ratified and, to do that, they needed time and also technical assistance from the ILO" (ibid., p. 123). Like the statements analysed before, this one is generally positive and requests something from the ILO, but as was the case with the statement on Kazakhstan, China also reminded Zimbabwe of its obligations. India's statement is similarly positive, highlighting the measures adopted by the Government. It further urges the committee to consider the progress made (ibid., p. 124).

Regarding Qatar, its implementation of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention is under discussion. China "encourage[s] the ILO to provide the necessary technical assistance, as requested by the Government [of Qatar]" (CAS, 2016, p. 143). India "expresse[s] appreciation of the various measures initiated" and "request[s] the Committee to fully take into account the detailed responses provided by the Government [of Qatar]" (ibid., p. 143). Both follow the patterns that have been discovered and discussed before. The US' speaker points to problems and requests the Qatari Government to "renew its commitment and redouble its efforts to protect all workers in the country from discrimination and promote equality in employment and occupation" (CAS, 2016, p. 139).

It can be summarized here that China and India follow a particular pattern in their statements. Regarding all examined statements, their statements are generally positive. What distinguishes their pattern is that Chinese representatives usually end

with requesting something specific for the country in question while India's representatives do not request something specific, but usually remind the responsible organ to consider the efforts taken and the progress made. Even though they are rivals in economic terms, this is not displayed in their statements. US' statements are usually more critical and its speakers usually request intensified efforts or something alike from the country whose situation is under discussion – this is a contrast to China's as well as India's contributions. Thus, it becomes obvious that Chinese statements follow a structure that is consistently applied. Even though Chinese statements clearly contrast with US statements, this does not automatically indicate revisionist behaviour.

3.3.9 Strategy

While the similar structure of Chinese and Indian statements might point to a similar strategy, the different structures of Chinese and US-American statements might point to different strategies. While the US' representatives frequently criticize, Chinese speakers usually compliment and reaffirms. The consistent use of this structure leads to the assumption that it serves a strategy, however, it can be only hypothesized what motivations and intentions lie behind it. It is possible that this strategy should serve the aim of wining friends within the ILO. On the one hand, they could be gathered as potential allies with whom China can substantially reform the ILO. In this case, this strategy could be compared to the soft power diplomacy approach China used in developing countries (Schweller & Pu, 2011). On the other hand, it is also possible that China only seeks to find allies for a reform which improves the status of countries of "the South" vis-à-vis "the West", but remains inside the existing framework of the ILO and would therefore not indicate revisionist tendencies. The former option would indicate revisionist behaviour, the latter not necessarily, rather reformist status quo. Another potential indicator for revisionist behaviour could be that Chinese and US-American statements usually contrast each other – Chinese representatives do not directly attack or question US' statements, nevertheless, this consistent opposition could be a sign for revisionist behaviour. In addition, if open criticism would be considered a norm of interaction, then China could be considered to disregard the norm by only issuing positive statements.

The only thing that is certain is that the structure of Chinese statements detected in this analysis is consistently applied. Everything else are assumptions of which some are more likely than others. There is no open display of revisionist behaviour. The

formulations and structure of Chinese contributions do not display significant tendencies to overthrow the rules and norms of the ILO or to completely ignore them. It cannot be predicted what goals the strategy will serve in the future, but for now, there is no evidence that the strategy serves the aim of fundamentally reorganising the ILO along Chinese ideas, and thus, no evidence for revisionist behaviour in the ILO.

3.4 Discussion of Findings

After having analysed Chinese behaviour in the ILO, it needs to be answered what the findings mean. What can we infer from them? How high is the overall match between statements and actions? How can overall Chinese behaviour in the ILO be categorized based on the findings? In how far are can the results be generalized?

It was assumed that the analysis on forced and child labour would contribute to the insight on Chinese behaviour in the ILO because different starting points were expected to result in different outcomes. This assumption cannot be confirmed, as for both issues, statements and reports are relatively rare. Regarding forced labour, those statements and actions accessible for this research refer more often to human trafficking than to forced labour specifically or to the situation in other countries. There does not seem to be a discrepancy between words and action or rather the scarcity of statements aggravates the detection of such. Chinese behaviour regarding this issue is categorized as status quo, although a reluctant status quo actor. Regarding, child labour, there is not a single direct reference in Chinese statements, not even concerning the situation in other countries. It was possible to find numerous deficiencies in Chinese behaviour regarding child labour – it was not possible, however, to detect discrepancies. Behaviour is categorized similarly as in the forced labour section. Thus, due to the scarcity of statements, it was not possible to examine whether Chinese behaviour differs related to whether it has ratified the relevant conventions.

In contrast, the comparison of Chinese statements with Indian and US-American statements provides interesting insight into Chinese behaviour in the ILO. It helped to detect the underlying structure of Chinese statements and showed that Chinese and Indian statements are usually close to each other while they contrast US statements most of the time. The one exception is related to the protocol and recommendation to the Forced Labour Convention where the US and China shared an opinion while India opposes them. In general, Chinese and Indian statements are positive and not critical; Chinese speakers typically end their statements with specific requests for the country

under discussion while Indian representatives frequently conclude their statements with the general request to take into account everything that has been done in the country. In some cases, Chinese representatives remind the country in question of its duty to comply with the ratified standard, this is the only formulation that could be counted as slight criticism. Specific criticism pointing to particular problems or insufficiencies were not found. The US, in contrast, is usually more critical. If its representatives request something, it is mostly from the country under discussion. Thus, the comparison helped to discover a structure in Chinese statements in the ILO and to see that Chinese and US statements usually contrast each other.

Regarding the discrepancies between words and actions concerning the various issues analysed, the record is mixed. In some cases, significant discrepancies were detected, in others words and actions match, but in most cases the level of discrepancies is not clear. One major problem is the scarcity of statements, particularly regarding forced labour and child labour, that makes it hard, sometimes even impossible, to say whether statements and actions match. Regarding other issues, there is an overall match between statements and actions, but there is one aspect that contradicts this general tendency. An example can be found in the section on compliance where the overall level of discrepancies is particularly low and the only inconsistency is the non-ratification of the Forced Labour Convention. This aggravates the classification of the level of discrepancy as the question is how this diverging aspect is weighted; it has mostly been decided that the majority of the examined material indicates low levels of discrepancy. However, only the cases that indicate a significant mismatch are unambiguous. Thus, an overall tendency cannot be determined – what can be inferred is that the level of convergence between statements and actions varies considerably. It could be assumed that Chinese statements on certain issues are rare on purpose so that it becomes more difficult to determine discrepancies, but evidence to prove that must still be found.

Concerning the overall categorization of Chinese behaviour in the ILO, the picture is clearer. There is no case in which behaviour is categorized as revisionist, the majority of cases indicates status quo behaviour. In general, there is no open display of revisionist behaviour. However, similar to the previous section, there are cases in which the categorization is not clear. There are two major problems: First, often enough aspects of behaviour can be interpreted in more than one way, aggravating a categorization. However, assumed underlying revisionist intentions could not be proven.

Consequently, behaviour is categorized as status quo based on what is observable, but might actually serve revisionist intentions. Second, the borders between status quo and revisionist are blurry. Does low engagement with particular issues already prove revisionist behaviour? Are numerous insufficiencies a sign of destructive intentions or merely of incapability? Is a single incident that is interpreted revisionist within an issue area significant? In most sections of the analysis, behaviour is categorized as status quo. Nevertheless, there are some aspects which could be interpreted as revisionist, for example the engagement for reform, the assumed strategy underlying the structure or several terms distinct to Chinese statements such as the Chinese dream. It is important to notice here that the same behaviour, for example, the engagement for reform, is categorized by some scholars as limited-aims-revisionist and by others as reform-minded status quo. Due to the overall lack of signs of dissatisfaction, of disregard of rules, of intentions to fundamentally change the ILO or of destructive actions, Chinese overall behaviour in the ILO is labelled reform-minded status quo. Based on this categorization, it is believed that a peaceful rise is possible. Nevertheless, revisionist intentions cannot be precluded. Behaviour as well as intentions are not static and change over time. In addition, current status quo behaviour could also be a cover which has been set up to avoid being labelled revisionist. As it is the sense of such a cover, evidence for this assumption was not found.

The findings are relevant for the study on China's rise as they offer insight into Chinese behaviour in an IO that is not located in the economic field. They provide an example of China behaving like a reform-minded status quo power in an IO. Nevertheless, the potential to generalize the findings is limited because Chinese behaviour has been analysed in the specific set up of the ILO. It cannot be concluded that Chinese behaviour is similar in other IOs outside the economic sphere. There is one finding, however, which has been detected in this analysis and is relevant for the study of rising powers in general: the distinction between status quo and revisionist is only partially meaningful and helpful in categorizing behaviour, often it is not that easy to assign behaviour to one of the two. The area where versions of both overlap is very interesting in this context.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this thesis, Chinese behaviour in the ILO is categorized as reform-minded status quo. Despite some aspects in some issues areas which indicate revisionist tendencies, the overall behaviour is status quo. There is no evidence that China seeks to overthrow the rules and principles of the ILO which benefited its rise and set it up completely new. It rather seeks to reform the ILO from within through active participation, negotiation, consensus-building and accommodation. The more China engages with other states, the more the rules of the ILO make sense to regulate engagement.

The findings show that more research needs to be done on the cutting point of status quo and revisionist to enable more precise categorization of Chinese behaviour as well as of rising powers in general. In addition, further research on China's behaviour in different IOs must be conducted to complement the theoretical literature on China's rise and on status quo and revisionist actors with concrete examples. It is further important that causal relationships between certain factors such as economic interests, entanglement in IOs, or cost/benefit analyses and Chinese behaviour are examined. As the comparison with India and the US proved to be insightful, further research with a broader set of states to compare would be useful to be able to classify Chinese behaviour even more accurately.

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6. List of appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of statements in the forced labour section

Appendix 2: Overview of the statements analysed in the structure section

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 -Overview of statements in the forced labour section

Topic	Position China	Position India	Position U.S.
Forced Labour in Myanmar	<p>positive/affirmative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -efforts must be recognized and encouraged -sanctions should be stopped -many positive developments -signs of commitment -request to lift all restrictions imposed on Myanmar <p>negative/critical:</p> <p>---</p>	<p>positive/affirmative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -appreciation of efforts made - recognition of progress <p>negative/critical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -some challenges remain 	<p>positive/affirmative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -efforts are welcomed <p>negative/critical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -real challenge will be to implement new policies and laws and see whether they are sustainable -penalties provided for in the law should be imposed
Forced Labour in Qatar	<p>positive/affirmative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -acknowledgement of progress made and efforts taken -signs of honest commitment -ILO should allow for more time to achieve meaningful progress -neither high-level tripartite meeting nor Commission of Inquiry necessary -draft decision should be reconsidered -issue should be removed from agenda -request for continued technical assistance <p>negative/critical:</p> <p>----</p>	<p>positive/affirmative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -welcoming positive steps and high degree of cooperation -ILO should allow for more time to achieve meaningful progress <p>negative/critical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -requests to complete reform process without delay 	<p>positive/affirmative:</p> <p>---</p> <p>negative/critical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -no significant progress has been made -request for faster

			reform - serious problems, particularly regarding the kafala system -request for high-level tripartite meeting -support for draft decision
Forced Labour in Belarus	Positive/affirmative: -efforts taken are remarkable -technical assistance should be provided negative/critical: ---	-no statement-	-no statement-
Protocol and Recommendation to Convention 29	positive/affirmative: -support adoption -Chinese legislation on forced labour is aligned with international standards -Chinese Constitution makes the State responsible for safeguarding human rights -legal provisions exist on suppression of forced labour which include penal sanctions -suppression of forced labour is a consensus of the international community negative/critical: -reassured that recommendation is not binding	positive/affirmative: --- negative/critical: -commitment to protocol would weaken national legislation -binding instrument prevents flexibility -sufficient to be bound by Convention No. 29 -only support the adoption of a recommendation, not	Positive/affirmative: -support adoption of a concise protocol and a more detailed recommendation that would provide guidance on measures of prevention, protection and compensation negative/critical: ---

		a protocol	
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Appendix 2– Overview of the statements analysed in the structure section

Topic	Position China	Position India	Position U.S.
Algeria: Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention	<p>positive/affirmative: -the committee should recognize commitment and efforts -request for technical assistance</p> <p>negative/critical: ---</p>	-no statement-	<p>positive/affirmative: ---</p> <p>negative/critical: -trade unionists are subjected to intimidations -many incidents previously discussed had not been remedied - regular Government interference - request Algerian Government to undertake serious reform</p>
Belarus: Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention	<p>positive/affirmative: -congratulation on close cooperation and progress -request technical assistance</p> <p>negative/critical: -still necessary to apply ratified convention</p>	<p>positive/affirmative: -developments are a clear proof of the Government's willingness to seriously address the issues raised -efforts deserved due recognition from ILO supervisory body</p> <p>negative/critical: -questions whether repeated discussion was necessary or due to political considerations</p>	<p>positive/affirmative: ---</p> <p>negative/critical: -repression of independent trade unions continued</p>
Bangladesh: Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention	<p>positive/affirmative: -sincere efforts to fulfil obligations under the convention</p> <p>negative/critical: ---</p>	<p>positive/affirmative: -efforts taken are listed</p> <p>negative/Critical: ---</p>	<p>positive/affirmative: ---</p> <p>negative/critical: - lack of progress - illustration of steps that still need to be taken</p>

Kazakhstan: Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention	<p>positive/affirmative: -improvements were made, political will to cooperate with the ILO shown -request for technical support</p> <p>negative/critical: -obligation to implement ratified conventions still needs to be fulfilled</p>	-no statement-	<p>positive/affirmative: ---</p> <p>negative/critical: -no indication that the tragedy was taken seriously -new laws adopted do not provide solutions -workers' rights continue to be undermined and restricted</p>
Malaysia: Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention	<p>positive/affirmative: -requests sufficient time for Malaysia</p> <p>negative/critical: ---</p>	<p>positive/affirmative: -support for labour legislation reforms -requests committee to fully consider information provided and commitment shown</p> <p>negative/critical: ---</p>	-no statement-
Zimbabwe: Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining	<p>positive/affirmative: -acknowledgement of implementation of recommendations -appreciation of process -request for more time and technical assistance</p> <p>negative/critical: ---</p>	<p>positive/affirmative: -highlighting measures adopted by the Government -requests committee to consider progress made</p> <p>negative/critical: ---</p>	-no statement-
Qatar: Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention	<p>positive/affirmative: - request for technical assistance</p> <p>negative/critical: ---</p>	<p>positive/affirmative: -appreciation for measures initiated -requests that responses of the Government be taken fully into account</p> <p>negative/critical: ---</p>	<p>positive/affirmative: ---</p> <p>negative/critical: -highlights problems -request for renewed</p>

			commitment and redoubled efforts to protect all workers form discrimination
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