



Evil Monsters and Machines
A Techno-Orientalist Perspective on Threat Perception in the United Kingdom

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Thesis, 30 ECTS (hp)

Political Science with a focus on Crisis Management and Security

Master's Programme in Politics and War

Autumn 2020

Supervisor: Ronnie Hjorth

Word count: 19766

Abstract

This thesis looks at the construction of China as a security threat in the United Kingdom, through the theoretical lens of techno-Orientalism. The main argument is that techno-Orientalist ideas influence the Western perception of China as a security threat, which leads to the creation of certain fears regarding China which affects the identity creation of both the United Kingdom and China. Techno-Orientalism shows how the West perceives itself as losing its grip on modernity, and thus the future; the East is being perceived as the producers of technology which lead to the opposite of the desired Western liberal humanism. Thus, the East is on its way to take over modernity and turn it into a technological oppressive future. These ideas influence how the United Kingdom perceives China as a security threat, and this is shown through a Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis of debates in the British Parliament.

Keywords: *Techno-Orientalism, Orientalism, Security, Threat Perception, United Kingdom, China, Discourse Analysis, Poststructuralism*

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1. Introduction

On the 14th of July 2020, the United Kingdom banned telecom-companies in the country from using Huawei's 5G technology, with the motivation that this particular technology should be considered a security risk to the national infrastructure (Kelion 2020). In 2020 the British Foreign Policy Group concluded in a research project that 83% of the United Kingdom's population regard China with distrust – with only Iran and North Korea being more distrusted than China (Gaston 2020). These findings raise some questions – why are the Chinese so distrusted? Why, in particular, is a Chinese company singled out on grounds of national security? How does this fit into the United Kingdom's current security discourse about China? What perceptions and prejudices influence and frame the way Western states interpret China as a security threat?

This thesis will look at if the Western discourse of China as a security threat is influenced by techno-Orientalism. Techno-Orientalism can be defined as “the phenomenon of imagining Asia and Asians in hypo- or hypertechnological terms in cultural productions and political discourse” (Huang, Niu, and Roh 2015, 2). Another definition comes from Ueno (1999) who defines techno-Orientalism in connection to Orientalism:

Just as the discourse of Orientalism has functioned to build up the identity of the West, techno-orientalism is set up for the West to preserve its identity in its imagination of the future. It can be defined as the Orientalism of cybersociety and the information age, aimed at maintaining stable identity in a technological environment (Ueno 1999, 95)

Techno-Orientalism is a theoretical perspective which looks at how the West constructs itself by how it constructs what it regards as others, with a specific focus on Asia. It shows how “visions of the purportedly technologically sophisticated economies and people of East Asia [acts] as foils for Western anxieties about the digital or information age” (Yeats 2015, 126). From a techno-Orientalist perspective, China is viewed as a treacherous, sinister character, whose main aim is to dominate the world through both the facilitation and the control of technology. This will then lead to an oppressive future for the West (Huang, Niu, and Roh 2015, 14). This thesis intends to study if and how this perspective is contributing to the construction of China as a security threat in the West. This view of a destructive, evil future is closely tied to ideas about modernity and technology. In the theoretical perspective of techno-Orientalism modernity is not only tied to advanced technology, but also to the West's liberal values. Thus, the West's conceptualisation of China through techno-Orientalism construct China as

something other and inhuman due to China's lack of 'modern' values (Morley and Robins 1995; Huang, Niu, and Roh 2015). I argue that techno-Orientalism as a theoretical perspective will help with our comprehension of the West's reaction to China, and of how the West perceives China.

To be clear, this thesis is not focused on the question if China *should* be seen as a security threat or not to the West. Rather, it is focused on how the idea of China as a security threat is constructed through techno-orientalist ideas in the West. The scope of this thesis will look at the United Kingdom, which is a Western country that historically has been tied to the creation of an Orientalist discourse to justify colonisation (Said 2003). Orientalism was first theorised specifically in relation to the United Kingdom (UK) and France, and as I do not understand nor speak French, the UK is the natural choice as the basis of analysis for a study about Orientalism. I have also lived in the UK and have a basic understanding of their political system. Thus, this thesis aims to increase our understanding of how China is perceived through techno-Orientalism specifically in the UK – but of course, according to the theoretical perspective used, similar ideas should be found in the Western context when China is being discussed, particularly when it is discussed in connection to technology. A secondary aim is to open up for conversations and ideas about how techno-Orientalism affects the West's view of China and to bring that perspective into studies of political science and security, and decision-making processes. I argue that it is important for both researchers and political decision-makers to be aware of their own prejudices, and that this study can shed some light on how this works in a political context regarding China. Therefore, this thesis focuses on how the British Parliament builds its view of China on techno-orientalist beliefs. I will look at the debates in the parliament which concern China that has taken place between January 2010 – September 2020 and do a discourse analysis to see if there are elements of techno-Orientalism in these discussions. Furthermore, techno-Orientalism has primarily been used in connection to technology; I want to see if there are elements or traces of it even in other discussions about security. Based on this the research question this thesis focus on concerns the understanding of why China is seen as a particularly threatening force in the Western, British, imagination. *How is the British discourse of China as a security threat influenced by techno-Orientalism?*

1.1 Techno-Orientalism and Poststructuralism

Techno-Orientalism fits into the theoretical field of poststructuralism. A poststructuralist approach:

is aimed at undermining, or at least making problematic, the claims to legitimacy and “normality” of dominant political and social institutions, discourses and practices – those which we commonly regard as normal, legitimate and, indeed, “natural”. It does this by exposing or unmasking the violence, coercion and domination behind these institutions, showing how their consistency is maintained through the more or less arbitrary exclusion of other possibilities. In other words, it shows that there is nothing inevitable or natural about the way we do and think about politics: what we perceive to be our political reality today is a contingent historical formation that has emerged through the suppression of alternative realities (Newman 2005, 1).

A poststructuralist approach is more interested in critically asking why only certain questions are raised than answering the questions posed; it questions the neutrality of the dominant universal beliefs about the world, and how that perspective came to be. Poststructuralism interrupts debates and discussions in political theory by redefining and questioning dominant ideas instead of conforming to them (Newman 2005, 2). “Knowledge, poststructuralists argue, is always contingent and dependent on systems of power and control within scientific communities and wider society” (Fox 2014, 1857). Orientalism is a discourse about the ‘other’ which has justified colonialism and other forms of the ‘White Man’s Burden’ and thus it is interesting to dissect and look at how/if this discourse in the form of techno-Orientalism influences the current debates about China as well, especially in terms of security.

Poststructuralism mainly argues that relations in languages create meaning in discourses, which produces structures, which then shape ideas and identities. This means that the social reality is both reproduced and changed due to discourses (Newman 2005, 5ff; Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 8ff). Hence, rather than using definitions to limit the understanding of what concepts such as modernity embodies as a static point, a poststructuralist study understands concepts as changeable meaning which is constantly reproduced depending on the context. Therefore, concepts are roughly understood and not defined. Thinkers who exist in the realm of poststructuralism includes Foucault and Deleuze, and they deconstruct these structures while arguing that there exist multiple discourses and power relations which shape our reality. Other thinkers in the field, like Derrida and Lacan, focuses on the stability of the structures and argues that there is an internal limit to the structures which lies outside them. This outside sphere is what makes the structure unstable and changeable (Newman 2005, 5ff). This thesis is mainly

built on ideas of structures from the first perspective, that there exist many different structures which influence debates about China, and that techno-Orientalism is only one of them. The logic of Orientalism, which techno-Orientalism comes from, emerged from Foucault's ideas about discourse (Said 2003, 3).

1.2 Disposition

This thesis will be split into six parts. Firstly, the previous and relevant research on Orientalism as well as the creation of threats in security studies will be presented and contrasted. There will also be a short section on how China is understood in the current literature in security studies. Secondly, the theoretical perspective of techno-Orientalism which will be used in this thesis will be clarified and articulated. Thirdly, the methodology and method of analysis will be made clear as well as the purpose of the method. Techno-Orientalism is a discourse; therefore, it is logical to use discourse analysis to analyse how techno-Orientalism as a discourse is influencing the construction of China as a security threat in the British Parliament. Fourthly, the debates in the House of Commons and House of Lords will be analysed. Lastly, there will be a short discussion about the implications of the analysis as well as why this is important. This, together with a conclusion of what techno-Orientalism tells us about the Western imagination of China will end this thesis.

2. Previous Research

This thesis looks at how techno-orientalist ideas influence the United Kingdom's construction of China as a security threat. This section presents a brief overview of the critical theoretical perspective Orientalism, threat perception and the Western view of China in security studies.

2.1 From Orientalism to Techno-Orientalism

Hall (1992, 186) argues that the West, rather than being a geographical area, is a historical construction. The West is a concept which is full of ideas such as modern, developed, secular etc., which has constructed and shaped how societies view both each other and themselves. Hence, the West is a form of comparison; it opens up for a value-driven categorisation of states to be sorted into 'non-Western' and 'Western' states. This logic is evident in Orientalism. Orientalism was first introduced as a critical theoretical perspective and discourse by Edward W. Said in his book *Orientalism* in 1978 (2003). He argues that Orientalism is created through the Western idea of the Orient, which focuses on exotifying and othering the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically and scientifically. Through its use of specific words and imagery, this construction of the Orient has become reality from the West's perspective and have created power structures (Said 2003, 5). "The Orient that appears in Orientalism, then, is a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western Europe" (Said 2003, 202). This idea of the Orient influences not only everything the West thinks it knows about the Orient, but also what the West thinks it knows about itself. By defining the Orient as barbaric, evil, weak, and cowardly, it defines itself as civilised, good, strong, and brave. The West is constructed as everything the Orient/East is not (Said 2003, 5ff). Said focuses on the Middle East, particularly from a Western British/French perspective, but his argument applies to all of Asia (Huang, Niu, and Roh 2015; Vukovich 2012; Ji 2017). He goes as far as arguing that all academic knowledge about the Orient is "somehow tinged and impressed with, violated by, the gross political fact[...] of orientalism" (Said 2003, 11). However, Said has received a lot of criticism for his ideas. Ji (2017) criticise Said's conceptualisation of Orientalism as a stable singular discourse. She argues that Western discourses about China have not always been about Western domination, and discourses which have emphasised similarities between China and the West has existed before. Multiple discourses exist, and they all influence the creation of the Orient through a Western perspective. However, the central point of Said's argument regarding both positionality and othering still holds against this logic; the West uses the Orient to position its own identity, and even if there is a discourse which emphasises similarities, it is still

underpinned by the logic of othering and difference. The need to focus on similarities still holds the logic that even if we are different overall, we are similar in this particular aspect. This can be seen in Vukovich arguments about how the current discourse about China should be seen as a new form of Orientalism, Sinological-Orientalism, which is focused on the sameness of China and Western countries. It includes the narrative that China is on its way to become the West. His main argument is that the West sees China as if it is on its way to be transformed into a more liberal, modern and open society like the Western states (Vukovich 2012, 1). This means that China is constructed as still not being the same as the West, but that it is on a path towards sameness. He argues that “China is still not ‘normal’ (and has been tragically different), but is engaged in a ‘universal’ process such that it will, and must, become the same as ‘us.’ Whether it wants to or not” (Vukovich 2012, 2).

Techno-Orientalism emerged in cultural studies, as a discourse and a theoretical perspective used to criticise the Western view of Asia and Asian bodies in books, art, movies, and other forms of media (Huang, Niu, and Roh 2015, 7). With its roots in Orientalism, techno-Orientalism was first conceptualised by Morley and Robins in 1995 as a way to expose the prejudices and racism that is tied to the word modernity in their study of how Japan was othered during the 80s (Morley and Robins 1995). Since then, there have been a few studies with this theoretical perspective (Huang, Niu, and Roh 2015; Fan 2015; Goh 2013; Hough 2015; Sohn 2008). Most of them has focused on Japan. One study by Kevin Hough shows how techno-Orientalist ideas shaped the United States image of Japan up until the end of WW2, starting with the Russian defeat in 1905. Hough tries to understand the US conceptualisation of Japan in his study of the US reaction to Pearl Harbour and argues that the country was viewed as a security threat before that through a techno-Orientalist discourse. “As the United States pondered its vulnerabilities, it developed an incongruous image of Japan: technologically adept, modern, chivalrous, and civilized, yet savage and ultimately an existential threat to the West” (Hough 2015, 31). This idea of Japan included the focus of Japan as the hidden enemy, as a being which disguised itself to fit in among civilians in the United States, always plotting the end of the West. Hough argues that these images influenced how the attack on Pearl harbour was perceived; from the U.S. perspective, this attack fits into a techno-orientalist narrative that the Japanese were finally showing their true treacherous character (Hough 2015, 31). Another study by Sohn (2008) uses Morley and Robins Techno-Orientalism to point to a particular type of dehumanisation through literary examples, and likens the portrayal of Asian bodies with that of Alien bodies:

the rise of techno-Orientalism reflects the perceived burgeoning peril to the United States represented by the Asia-Pacific in the 1980s. In traditional Orientalism, the East is often configured as backwards, anti-progressive, and primitive. In this respect, techno-Orientalism might suggest a different conception of the East, except for the fact that the very inhuman qualities projected onto Asian bodies create a dissonance with these alternative temporalities. Even as these Alien/Asians conduct themselves with superb technological efficiency and capitalist expertise, their affectual absence resonates as an undeveloped or, worse still, a retrograde humanism (Sohn 2008, 8).

Techno-Orientalism is a flexible discourse, and the exact form it takes changes depending on the context. One study which looks at how this Asian Other is constructed as a security threat is done by Crum (2015). He studies how techno-Orientalism is present in the construction of an inferior and barbaric Asian other as a threat in the 1920s-1940s in radio broadcasts in the U.S. He examines how the technological development of this Asian other was trivialised and argues that techno-Orientalism in this context reveals the U.S. anxieties and worries about the future regarding technology and economy. A critical study which partly looks at security is Liu's (2015) research, which looks at the techno-Orientalist discourse in the book *The Difference Engine* from a queer perspective and focuses on the connections between technology, temporality, and race. He argues that the temporal form used in the novel creates a binary between a primitive past and a “perfectible future, thus organizing the present as the ongoing act of correctly syncing each side to the other” (Liu 2015, 67). This leads to the construction of an inappropriate disorder in the novel of the temporal sequencing, while also portraying Asia in similar terms to time. The story follows a techno-Orientalist trope which positions Asia as a threat to modernity’s future, and how the West needs to skew the future to keep the current/present modernity safely in Western hands. Yeats (2015) also has a security dimension in his study where he explores the West’s anxieties about the East in the war games *Red Dawn* and *Homefront*, which depict how the U.S. is invaded by a North Korean force. He argues that North Korea is used in these games as a stand-in for China, which is considered the real threat to the U.S., and that the U.S.’s fear of being colonised by China is especially evident in *Red Dawn*. Technology is perceived as the main reason for the U.S.’s superiority, and the games connect military technological advancement with the control over freedom and sovereignty. Yeats argues that these war games are part of “the ongoing mass-market cultural work of reproducing and repackaging aggressive U.S. policy objectives into feel-good defenses of the ‘American Way’” (Yeats 2015, 125). Even if there is a security dimension in some of these

studies, so far there has not been a study who uses techno-Orientalism in the British context, and who looks especially at threat perception on a political level, with a focus on politicians.

2.2 Threats and Orientalism in Security Studies

One of the most known ideas about threats comes from securitization theory, coined by Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde, which theorises how issues become security threats, and connects that to political action. Something is securitised if it “is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure” (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998, 24). If an issue is securitised, it is constructed as a threat through speech acts by an authority figure and is accepted as such by the audience; it does not need to be a ‘real’ existential threat in a sense, but it needs to be presented and accepted by the audience as such. Another comprehension on the perception of threats comes from Janice Gross Stein (2013) who connects the findings of cognitive psychologists with the study of threat perception, particularly the rationalist idea that inaccurate threat perceptions come from non-credible signals which then result in war and armed conflicts. Building onto ideas by Meyer, she looks at both the individual, as well as at the state-level in her theoretical development and connects emotions and pre-existing ideas with rational information processing. She argues that the evidence shows the importance of existing beliefs when it comes to threat perception as “people strongly prefer consistency, that they are made uncomfortable by dissonant information, and that they consequently deny or discount inconsistent information to preserve their beliefs” (Stein 2013, 372). Hence, there exists a bias in how much importance and trust the subject put in some information versus other forms of information, and how this leads to incomplete generalisations which impact leaders judgement (Stein 2013, 365ff). Mitzen (2006) coined the concept of ontological security, security of the self or identity security, and linked it to the spacialisation of time. “Ontological security refers to the need to experience oneself as a whole, continuous person in time — as being rather than constantly changing — in order to realize a sense of agency” (Mitzen 2006, 342). Drawing on the work of Anthony Giddens and Lisbeth Aggestam, Mitzen argues that ontological security can serve as a motivation for actions, and fulfil both individuals as well as nation-states need for stability and helps define the self through the action of others (Mitzen 2006, 344, 357). This also one of the key ideas in techno-Orientalism.

One example of how Orientalism has been used in connection to security studies can be seen in Patrick Porter’s book *Military Orientalism*. Porter (2013) argues that the Eastern way to make

war is exoticized and that the differences between the East and the West are exaggerated through Orientalism (Porter 2013, 18). Porter combines the concept of Orientalism with the military and connects the West's fascination with so-called 'Eastern' ways of war with its own identity creation, building directly on Said's logic. Another study, by Hobson (2012), offers a theoretical orientalist critique of the Eurocentric perspectives in international theory which assume that there is a need for intervention by the West in the East, to contain and secure a liberal world order with the West as the top form of civilisation (Hobson 2012, 129). He particularly criticises post-modern theorists like Foucault and Baudrillard for ignoring Eastern agency, and argues that they are guilty of exaggerating the West's power and unity, and thus "failing to recognize the interactive relationship between East and West, precisely because of Said's conception of Orientalism/Eurocentrism rests on the Self/Other identity-formation process that Foucault first emphasized" (Hobson 2012, 133). Bassil (2019) looks at and criticises the orientalist discourse in the West which concern the Islamic State, and the violence the group have perpetrated, and how this discourse contributes to a deeply racist and problematic narrative about the people in and from the Orient as well as of the religion Islam. Another example of how Orientalist discourse has been studied in security studies is Maryam Khalid's book *Gender, Orientalism, and the 'War on Terror'* which looks at the presence of gendered orientalist ideas in the Bush regime's creation of the War on Terror, specifically on the construction of Iraq and Afghanistan as the evil enemy, and how that justified the U.S. intervention in those countries. She concludes that Orientalism is a gendered discourse which cement representations as facts, and understanding that "uncovers a system of representations that produces and renders intelligible specific categories such as 'East', 'Arab', 'Muslim', 'West', 'Civilised', and 'barbaric', and organises them according to binary logics, and in hierarchical ways" (Khalid 2017, 152). She argues that the 'War on Terror' discourse created a link between the Taliban and Saddam Hussein which was built on a gendered understanding of the Orientalist Other's desire and nature, which included a feminine characteristic like irrationality and tied it to the Oriental masculinity. These ideas helped create a narrative of how a barbaric form of masculinity was set out to destroy the civilised Western world (Khalid 2017, 155).

Similar to these studies, this thesis looks critically at a phenomenon through a theoretical perspective which focuses on inequality and representations. This binary logic present in Orientalism is partly what this thesis is centred on but from a techno-Orientalist perspective. These ideas presented on threat perception are related to how in techno-Orientalism the West perceives the East as a threat. I do not only look at the speech acts as a form of securitisation,

but rather on how, through language, China is othered in these debates. I also do not connect ideas with action as I am not looking at how the British Parliament justifies certain actions through their use of otherings, but rather on how they create a representation of China through these otherings, and on how that influences their threat perception of China.

2.3 China

There has been a lot of research done on China within the academic field of security studies. Researchers have studied the Western view of China from both critical and non-critical perspectives. Some research is a Western attempt to understand and predict the tactics and strategies used by China. Ratner (2011) argues that it is important to look at the Chinese government through different perspectives, and not only strategic ones, and tries to perceive the emergent security threats which China will have to handle in the future. Zhang (2019) investigates how the PRC use coercion, both military and non-violent coercion as a tactic against other states in the South China Sea. Saunders (2020) explores China's strategies and calculations when it comes to their national security. He looks at aspects such as their modernisation of their military as well as their international and regional cooperation and diplomacy in both military and other security fields to analyse how China is trying to secure its strong position in the world order. The focus is on how China is protecting its national interests overseas by looking at their military strategies, and their peacekeeping operations to better understand China's behaviour (Saunders 2020). Overall, these studies do not tell us that much about China, as they are still from a Western perspective.

Other studies about China focuses on how the West views China. Möller (2007) gives an account of how the West has researched China from the 80s until the early 2000s. He looks at how the debates have gone from discussing multipolarity to China's rise, and conclude that the research has been dominated by different strands of thought at different times:

The evolution of the European debate over two decades points to an early dominance of Sinological exceptionalists, followed by a challenge by "internationalists" that pulled the Sinologists back in conceptual terms, followed in turn by the emergence of constructivism that provided the Sinologists with an excuse to once again turn exceptionalist (Möller 2007, 183).

Hook, through a descriptive study, gives an account of how the British threat perception of China has changed and developed from 1945-2000, with a focus on Hong Kong and how the handover of Hong Kong to China affected it (Hook 2004). Roy (1996, 758) conducted a

literature review over the different arguments on the pro-China vs anti-China stances politically. Focusing on the China threat, the arguments he presents concern regional instability and how China could transform into a superpower which would increase both their power and threat level to the West. More recently, Song (2015) did a securitisation analysis with a poststructuralist approach and analyses how the West securitises China from three different perspectives.

One of the more interesting pieces of research is by Pan Chengxin (2012), who discusses how, in the current Western research on the rise of China, China is usually approached either as a security threat or as a country full of economic opportunities. Building onto arguments by Said, Clifford, and Geertz about the autobiographical nature of knowledge, Pan argues that most studies about China's rise to power say more about how the West views itself rather than producing actual useful knowledge about China. Two paradigms (or narratives), opportunity and threat, perpetuate the East as something **Other** to the West (Pan 2012, 43). Focusing on this othering, Pan argues that it "is not so much about treating others as threats per se as it is about the employment of such discursive tactics as imposition, reduction, and denial when it comes to understanding other's subjectivities" (Pan 2012, 56). Furthermore, using the threat paradigm when looking at China tells us about how the West is afraid to be treated like they have treated others in history; the West is afraid to be colonized, conquered by China. This paradigm is built onto ideas about Western superiority due to knowledge – i.e. modernity and technology – which allows/have allowed them to justify not only the current world order but also colonisation (Pan 2012, 43ff). Hence, it includes ideas of Orientalism, 'the white man's burden' etc. Through

representing China as a monolithic whole, dismissing its subjectivities, and/or imposing onto it a singular, fixed subjectivity of power politics, the "China threat" paradigm acts as a discursive construction of an objectified Other, cast as an Other and threatening object, China by definition lacks the kind of rationality and subjectivity that are characteristic of the Western knowing subject (Pan 2012, 55).

I would argue that these two paradigms which Pan are arguing for, are constructed partly with techno-Orientalist ideas and that techno-Orientalism can help us understand why in particular these two paradigms are leading in the West's narrative of the future of China. Rather than looking at China as either an opportunity or a threat, as something or the other, the perception of China can be understood as being built onto constructions of otherings which can be used in

both of these paradigms. In contrast to these studies, this study will contribute to our understanding of how specifically techno-Orientalism is working through otherings, and how that perspective influences the current political discourse about China with a focus on how China is constructed and produced as a security threat from a British perspective. As it is focused on the Western perception of China rather than China itself, it will also look at how the West is perceiving itself through this othering of China. Hence, this research differs from other research on China through its focus on techno-Orientalism as an attempt to understand a political discourse in the West, specifically in the UK.

3. Theory

The theoretical perspective of techno-Orientalism has been developed from Said's conceptualization of Orientalism. Hence, techno-Orientalism is an unconscious ideology which has been created on the structures provided by Orientalism (Ueno 1999, 97). Like Orientalism, techno-Orientalism is an othering discourse, which puts the West and the Orient into two separate categories. The main difference between Orientalism and techno-Orientalism concerns the qualities these two categories are ascribed. In Orientalism, the East is produced as primitive, barbaric, inhuman and retrograde. It is perceived to have the same qualities in techno-Orientalism, but in addition to this the East is constructed as hyper-technological and futuristic (Sohn 2008, 8). This means that the East in techno-Orientalism is often made up of what appears to be contradictory images (Huang, Niu, and Roh 2015, 3).

Ueno (1999) argues that the main point of techno-Orientalism is that it functions as a way for the West to stabilise its identity in a rapidly changing world while justifying why the West should have a leading position in that world. He defines techno-Orientalism in connection to Orientalism:

Just as the discourse of Orientalism has functioned to build up the identity of the West, techno-orientalism is set up for the West to preserve its identity in its imagination of the future. It can be defined as the Orientalism of cybersociety and the information age, aimed at maintaining stable identity in a technological environment (Ueno 1999, 95).

Thus, through techno-Orientalism, the West is still constructed as the civilised, superior, good, enlightened being, but as a being who is losing its rightful grip on the future. The threatening element of this barbaric, yet technological advanced East is fundamental in the creation of the West's identity in techno-Orientalism. Morley and Robins (1995) argue that this has made the West question its centrality when it comes to modernity, and thus the future for the world, as well as the assumptions made through Orientalism and that this has led into the creation and production of techno-Orientalism. Using the rise of Japan in the 80s as an example, they argue that because Japan no longer fits into the conceptualisation of the barbaric other, it has become an even more dangerous figure in the West's imagination. Japan works as a disorienting force to the West who cannot produce it as an inferior other based on their current conceptualisation of modernity in Orientalism. Morley and Robins argue that how Japan was seen to begin to fit into and embody this 'universal' modernity revealed how the Western idea about modernity is tied to the Western identity as the progressive.

What Japan has done is to call into question the supposed centrality of the West as a cultural and geographical locus for the project of modernity. It has also confounded the assumption that modernity can only be articulated through the form the West has articulated (Morley and Robins 1995, 160).

Japan, for all its technological and democratic progress, is not seen as a progressive country like the Western countries – though it made the West question its own modernity by being even ‘better’ at it in some aspects than the West.

This focus on modernity is a key aspect of techno-Orientalism. In Orientalism, modernity functioned as a tool in colonialism, to put the Orient in a system of oppression and exploitation for the West’s interests. Hence the Orient is always an object, as it is being deprived of its subjectivity by the West. When an Eastern country enters the developed world of modernity, it challenges and reveals the racist assumptions which underlie the structure (Morley and Robins 1995, 159, 171). This makes the West conceptualise and define, in this case, China, through techno-Orientalist terms to keep these states from reaching modernity. Even if they succeed in the technological sense, they are still lacking it in other ways – namely, they have not fully embraced the right liberal, **human** values. The technological aspect of Western identity is linked to the future, and Western supremacy and masculinity. Through gendered terms, technology has been central to the West’s understanding of modernity, and the loss of its technological authority works as a form of emasculation of the West (Morley and Robins 1995, 167).

Huang, Niu, and Roh (2015) introduces techno-Orientalism in the book *Techno-Orientalism: Imagining Asia in Speculative Fiction, History, and Media* and they bring up how the Asian body itself has been constructed as a type of expendable technology. They show how racist policies against immigrant Chinese railroad workers were justified through the idea of how Chinese bodies were different, stronger and more durable than American bodies. This idea was used as an argument to exclude Chinese bodies from protection measures granted American bodies. The belief of how Chinese immigrant workers bodies were radically different date back to at least the 1880s when U.S. politicians accused the Chinese of being machines of flesh and blood who had come to steal jobs from the human, white Americans (Hough 2015, 33). Hence, techno-Orientalism directly works as a form of dehumanisation, through this othering of Asian bodies which constructs them as something which is meant to be used and discarded rather than the Western body, ‘our’ body which needs to be protected.

Huang, Niu, and Roh (2015) argue that China and Japan have been subjected to different forms of techno-Orientalism. “If Japan is a screen on which the West has projected its technological fantasies, then China is a screen on which the West projects its fears of being colonized, mechanized, and instrumentalized in its own pursuit of technological dominance” (Huang, Niu, and Roh 2015, 4). They argue that while Japan is seen as a competitor in terms of technological innovation, China is constructed as a threat through its massive capacity to produce and manufacture technology. “Japan creates technology, but China *is* the technology” (Huang, Niu, and Roh 2015, 4). However, there has been a narrative change in the last ten to twenty years in how China is perceived. From being seen as made up of mindless, almost machine-like factory workers, the Chinese have transformed into a similar identity that the West earlier prescribed Japan; ‘sinister agents’ who are plotting world domination by controlling and facilitating technology, while keeping themselves as the producers of technology, which will lead to the opposite of the desired Western liberal humanism. They are constructed as evil geniuses, who are plotting the creation of an authoritarian, technological and dystopian future, and they will create this future by taking over modernity and transform it to exclude liberal values such as freedom and human rights (Huang, Niu, and Roh 2015, 14). Morley and Robins argue that Japan (the East) will create an Eastern version of the future, which has been constructed as an evil future. Through a techno-Orientalist discourse, they argue that the “association of technology and Japaneseness now serves to reinforce the image of a culture that is cold, impersonal and machine-like, an authoritarian culture lacking emotional connection to the rest of the world” (Morley and Robins 1995, 169). Furthermore, they link the creation of an evil, other future with the control over technology:

If the future is technological, and if technology has become “Japanised”, then de syllogism would suggest that the future is now Japanese too... Japan is the future, and it is a future that seems to be transcending and displacing Western modernity (Morley and Robins 1995, 168).

Now China has taken the place of Japan and is viewed as the primary threat which will bring forward this evil future.

So, to summaries: multiple elements make up techno-Orientalism. Key aspects of this theory are:

- the West’s superiority being connected to modernity, and so-called ‘progressive’ or liberal values, including democracy and human rights, which works as a dehumanising practice of the Eastern other.

- The control over technology is connected to the control over the future.
- The East, China, in this case, is dehumanised through terms of technology; often described as less than human through terms that likens them to machines, with a focus on their lack of emotions and interchangeability.
- Altogether, this creates a narrative where the Eastern other is constructed as a suspicious, manipulative, evil, barbaric, less-than-human creature, who is plotting to make the West lose its rightful place at the top of the hierarchy in the world, thus leading the world onto a path which will destroy the West's liberal values.
- This all shows how the West not only views the Eastern other but also itself in its construction of the Eastern other.

4. Methodology

This thesis looks at how techno-Orientalist ideas influence the United Kingdom's construction of China as a security threat. As this is a study which is built on poststructuralist ideas about epistemology, a single case study which will keep the focus on a specific context is suitable. Poststructural research primarily uses case studies to explore how discourses construct and reproduces different phenomenon (Mohammed et al. 2015, 97, 103), and as this thesis is trying to show how the discourse of techno-Orientalism is influencing the West's construction of China as a security threat, it is deemed appropriate. A post-structural case study allows for a deeper understanding of how power and knowledge help construct both perceptions and behaviour (Mohammed et al., 2015, p. 97). This is why this study is structured as a single-case study. The choice of discourse analysis as a method lies in that it is a method which is intertwined with theory (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 4). This is even more evident in techno-Orientalism, which is directly built on ideas of discourse. Furthermore, this study has been made with an abductive logic, with the starting point that the researcher will learn more about the research during the research process, and thus make changes to the design when appropriate. This makes for a more circular process than a deductive or inductive piece of research and allows the researcher to be flexible and open-minded about both the theoretical perspective, method and empirical material (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 34).

4.1 Discourse Analysis

Studies done with discourse analysis enhance our understanding of how inequalities and power structures are normalised and rationalised through language and seen as 'true' (Taylor 2013, 35; Zeeman et al. 2002, 99). It primarily concerns the production of meaning, but also the production of power relations. This can be seen in how discourses communicate as

they both frame and prescribe the agenda for meaning making in a dialogic situation. When a discourse is invoked it is intended to set the terms for negotiating meaning. Discourses position the speaker, the listeners, and the salient actors or groups who are relevant to the narrative (Bevir and Rhodes 2016, 317).

These are all aspects of power – who is able to speak, who listens, and how are different ideas in the discourse portrayed? Discourses also show how certain power relations become normalised, and perceived as reasonable, to the extent that it is impossible to challenge them (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 32). Power, according to Jorgensen and Phillips, is seen as the producer of contingent knowledge and identities and thus has a central part in the discourse (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 37). Moreover, ideas of hegemony are important in regard to both

the production of meaning and power, as hegemony allows for multiple discourses to somewhat peacefully exist while arguing that there is a dominant discourse. So, there exists a power relation between different discourses as well.

There exists epistemological and ontological reasoning behind the formulation of discourse analysis, including why the discourse is the object of analysis. One key element is that ‘reality’ cannot be separated from how it is characterised. Objectivity does not exist because there does not exist one form of reality; everything is always interpreted from the interpreter’s perspectives and interests. Discourse analysis as a method has the aim to understand how this perspective of reality is constructed and perceived, and questions the acknowledged, so-called ‘neutral’ version of reality (Taylor 2013, 35). As the reality is made up of different discourses, we must examine these discourses to understand our perceived reality (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 21). The approach of discourse analysis which will be used in this thesis is influenced by Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA), which focuses on legitimisation and power. It is a very broad version of discourse analysis, as it “incorporates thematic features such as narratives, explanation, values, and ideological perspectives, and the discursive processes of persuasion, power manipulation, and positioning” (Bevir and Rhodes 2016, 318). FDA is often used to study the language of authorities, to show on a structural level how inequalities in regard to the current social order work. Thus, by studying this language one can look at how power structures are constructed and reproduced, which is vital to our understanding of social orders in both society and politics (Meyer and Wodak 2009, 8ff). Inspired by these ideas, I developed my own version of FDA to focus on and analyse aspects of the techno-Orientalist discourse, which most of all focuses on positioning, values and power. By going through these debates and studying the discursive constructions of China through techno-Orientalism, I will show how different aspects of techno-Orientalism are present in the construction of China in these transcripts. This will be highly connected to the summary points at the end of the theory section. Hence, this discourse is mainly a textual analysis. Firstly, I will look at how China is othered through a discourse constructed and reproduced in the UK Parliament, how the MPs and others are describing them with ideas present in Orientalism, particularly suspicion, ruthlessness, evil, and then look at how these otherings exist even regarding technology and modernity. This is what makes up the techno-Orientalist discourse. Secondly, I will analyse how China is described and constructed as a security threat, with an emphasis on China’s otherness, in the chosen debates. Through the material, I have found three main ways in which China is described as a threat to the UK: China’s action in the international system, China’s influence in the United

Kingdom and China as the future hegemonic superpower. Thus, the second part of the analysis will be split into three sections.

4.2 Reflexivity and Trustworthiness

Reflexivity is a critical way for the researcher to look at their own sense-making of the material and reflect over their position and how that affects the research process. It

includes the self-monitoring of the researcher's own 'seeing' and 'hearing' in relation to knowledge claims, including theoretical expectations, as articulated in presentations of the research setting, actors, and so on in the research manuscript, as well as of his or her own emotional reactions to events, people, sites, documents (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 101).

The researcher's subjective view influences the interpretation of the empirical and theoretical material, and thus the analysis as well (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 80). Or, as expressed by Jorgensen and Phillips:

The discourse analyst is often anchored in exactly the same discourses as he or she wants to analyse. And, under all circumstances, the discourse analyst is always anchored in some or other discursive structure. Although discourse analysis is about distancing oneself from these discourses and "showing them as they are", in this kind of theory there is no hope of escaping from the discourses and telling the pure truth, truth in itself being always a discursive construction (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 49).

Thence, it is highly important to keep a critical view of one's own work, and the knowledge/understanding one might manage to contribute. How does my own assumptions and beliefs affect the research process, and the analysis? I do believe that China is a threat towards the West in the sense that they are moving towards becoming the hegemonic superpower, and that will probably negatively affect the West. I also believe that it is a smart move to not let an authoritarian state invest and facilitate technology which is used for critical infrastructure in a state like the UK. Regarding sense-making, the question 'does this make sense?' has been at the centre of the work in this thesis, especially in the analysis. What exactly do these statements say, and how is it possible to understand them from the theoretical lens of techno-Orientalism? These questions were repeatedly asked during the analysis of the debates. Another question that I asked myself is if it is problematic that I, as a Western white woman, use techno-Orientalism to understand the West as techno-Orientalism is a perspective which has been primarily used by researchers who have some kind of connection to Asia. I do not believe it is, as I do not try to apply this theory on Asia itself, but rather focus on the Western context which I have a

primary understanding of, even if I have not faced the type of dehumanisation present in these debates.

Aside from sense-making, the trustworthiness in a poststructuralist study is evaluated mainly through intertextuality – the consistency of the presented evidence from different sources – and to what degree other interpretations have been considered (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 108ff). The first is addressed in how this study looks at 30 different debates, which means that multiple sources are analysed to see a pattern across these debates with different speakers, and through that, a range of different voices are considered. However, because the study is only looking at debates, there is a lack of other types of sources. The second one is related to how sense-making is approached in this study; when doing the analysis, other interpretations of the statements in regard to the context and other discourses have been considered.

4.3 Empirical Material

Mohammed et al. (2015) argue that because case studies allow the researcher to analyse how a discourse is constructed and reproduced, it provides a deeper understanding of the discourse. Through its empirical material, the researcher can show how power and knowledge are perceived and comprehended through the studied phenomenon (Mohammed et al. 2015, 97). This is what I am attempting with the empirical material I will analyse. The material used is transcripts of debates from the British Parliament (which can be found at hansard.parliament.uk) from both chambers. The debates have been found through the search-words ‘China’, ‘Huawei’ and ‘Hong Kong’, as I assumed debates related to these words would primarily include discussions related to China. Because most discussions about national security take place in the government behind closed doors, a full picture cannot be provided for how the United Kingdom’s Government perceive China (not to mention that it is impossible to provide a full picture of anything). However, these public debates do have several people from the government participating, and even if they are not allowed to fully express their worries and concerns regarding security due to this being publicly available information, it should be possible to discern the United Kingdom’s perception of China from how they and others in the parliament discuss China. I will look at debates which have taken place between January 2010–September 2020. This time period was chosen as I am mostly interested in understanding the recent developments of the security concerns on China, but I also want to see if elements of this particular discourse have been present for a while, and to what degree. Huang, Niu and Roh’s argument that China started to be perceived differently 10–20 years ago have also influenced

the decision to focus on this time period. I have found 95 debates which concern China in the British Parliament during this time period. Due to the number of debates, I have chosen to focus on those which primarily concern security for the UK. After a quick look, I have categorised these debates into the following categories: Hong Kong (40), Human Rights (23), Security (30), Economy (20), and Environment/Animal Rights (4). Some debates have been placed in multiple categories, as they concern multiple subjects. My sorting of these debates was fairly quick due to time restraints. Many of the debates about Hong Kong could be argued to have a security dimension, but as I had to limit the number of debates and they primarily concern security for the city of Hong Kong rather than the UK, I did not sort them under security. Therefore, the empirical material which is analysed in this thesis consist of 30 debates.

Table 1

Nr.	Title:	Date:	Subject:	Words:	Place:
1.	China	2010-01-13	E & S	12088	Commons Chamber
2.	China: EU Committee Report	2010-06-09	E, HR & S	22919	Lords Chamber
3.	China	2011-07-19	E & S	577	Commons Chamber
4.	China: Mineral Acquisitions	2012-07-12	E & S	1180	Lords Chamber
5.	China: Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament	2012-11-22	E & S	17984	Lords Chamber
6.	Tensions in the East and South China Seas	2013-01-22	S	799	Commons Chamber
7.	China	2013-04-15	S	174	Commons Chamber
8.	United Kingdom and China	2013-11-07	E, HR & S	25577	Lords Chamber
9.	UK Relations with China	2013-11-19	E, HR & S	11759	Commons Chamber
10.	China: Air Defence Identification Zone	2014-01-16	S	8043	Lords Chamber
11.	China: Investment into the United Kingdom	2014-05-07	E & S	7686	Lords Chamber
12.	South China Sea: Territorial Claims	2016-09-12	S	1116	Lords Chamber
13.	South China Sea	2018-10-22	S	605	Commons Chamber
14.	South China Sea: Royal Navy Deployment	2018-11-01	E & S	1226	Lords Chamber
15.	Huawei	2019-04-25	S	2002	Lords Chamber
16.	UK Telecoms: Huawei	2019-04-25	S	6778	Commons Chamber
17.	China: UK Policy	2019-05-07	HR & S	11983	Commons Chamber
18.	Tariff Policies: US and China	2019-10-17	E & S	388	Commons Chamber

19.	Hong Kong	2019-10-24	HK & S	23892	Lords Chamber
20.	Huawei: UK's 5G Network	2020-01-27	S	2125	Lords Chamber
21.	5G Network and Huawei	2020-01-27	S	7412	Commons Chamber
22.	Huawei and 5G	2020-03-04	S	14597	Commons Chamber
23.	South China Sea Operations	2020-05-12	S	539	Commons Chamber
24.	Hong Kong National Security Legislation: UK Response	2020-06-02	HK & S	12 266	Commons Chamber
25.	China	2020-06-17	HR & S	1592	Lords Chamber
26.	China	2020-06-29	HR & S	1696	Lords Chamber
27.	South China Sea	2020-06-30	S	578	Commons Chamber
28.	China: Supply Chains	2020-07-01	S	1522	Lords Chamber
29.	China	2020-07-22	HR & S	6161	Lords Chamber
30.	South China Sea: Freedom of Navigation	2020-09-03	S	3306	Commons Chamber

E: Economy, S: Security, HR: Human Rights, HK: Hong Kong

5. Analysis

5.1 Othering, Modernity and Technology

In this part of the analysis, the relationship between othering, modernity and technology in the chosen debates will be analysed. The focus will be on the interactions between these three concepts, on how they influence each other, and on how the representation of China is constructed based on these otherings in addition to being othered through a specific conceptualisation of modernity and technology. This first part shows how the perception of China as cold and ruthless, treacherous and suspicious, and manipulative and evil is normalised through the repeated use of these types of otherings in the debates. The otherings in the first chapter are mostly a part of an Orientalist discourse but they still contribute to the techno-Orientalist construction of China through the normalisation of an othered China in these specific terms. The connection of these otherings with ideas of modernity and technology develops the discourse into a techno-Orientalist one, and in the second part, this will be analysed in connection with the threat perception of China in the parliament.

5.1.1 Othering: Ruthless, Suspicious and Evil

Othering is one of the aspects which is at the forefront of both Orientalism and techno-Orientalism. It happens in multiple ways, mainly through a description of China and of China's actions, and through the topics discussed in relation to China. China is othered in discussions concerning issues from animal and environmental rights, to China's actions in the South China Sea and Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom's use of Chinese technology. The most common constructions of China are centred around three types of characterisations: China as cold and ruthless, China as treacherous and suspicious, and China as manipulative and evil. Often, China is depicted as more than one of these in a single statement, which shows how this techno-Orientalist form of othering is made up of all of these ideas. The construction of China as unfeeling, manipulative and suspicious is most obvious when it comes to discussions about human rights and national security. One example of this is in Jo Swinson's speech when she brings up the execution of Shaikh:

The secrecy of the Chinese judicial system was also very evident. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office was not told that the death penalty had been handed down until months after the sentence was passed. Clive Stafford Smith from Reprieve said: "Despite having flown to China to be with him, Shaikh's family were not told of his death until he was already apparently buried in the frozen soil of Urumqi. Nobody told the family how or where he would be killed. No family member or independent observer was allowed to

witness his death, view his body or verify his burial. We have only the word of a press release that he was even killed (HC Deb 13 January 2010a).

Here, China is constructed as ruthless and evil. By deliberately not informing the family, by letting them believe Shaikh was alive months after he was dead, China is here constructed as deliberately causing his family more pain. The killing itself is here not thought of as evil, rather the focus is on the circumstances surrounding Shaikh's death. It is framed as a secret, and as illegitimate because of the shutting out of non-Chinese media and powers. It also makes the listener/reader question the trustworthiness of China; is Shaikh even dead? The victims here are not only Shaikh's family but also Swinson and the persons she is talking to; they have suffered because of China's secrecy and untrustworthiness, which is inherent in the Chinese system, due to the uncertainty of Shaikh's death. The Chinese judicial system is created as a system where this type of behaviour, this secrecy and coldness is not only normalised, but it is a fundamental part of the system, which alludes to that being its nature. This untrustworthiness shows up in multiple accounts in these debates. In the debate *China: Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament*, Lord Howe of Aberavon discusses and questions China's credibility and asks how they can trust the sincerity of the Chinese people themselves while alluding to the general feelings of anxiety which surrounds them in the UK.

We have to underline—as others have already done—the importance in this context of hoping for active participation by the People's Republic of China. It is an area where there is some anxiety—as there often is about the People's Republic of China. How we can be sure, our media often ask, about the sincerity and credibility of the people that I have indicated they describe? (HL Deb 22 November 2012a)

This statement and its questions show how the othering in the discourse works, as it not only questions China's regime but the *Chinese people themselves*. They are constructed as untrustworthy while acknowledging the UK's need for China to act in the international system. Furthermore, this lack of trust for China is connected to fears, as Lord Howe alludes to the anxiety people feel about China. This is an interesting contradiction to how they are constructed in a speech by Mark Pritchard in the debate *UK Relations with China*. He takes up animal rights in China and talks about hypothetical and metaphorical dragons to allude to China's danger against the world itself, through an emphasis on the Chinese people's violence and barbaric behaviour:

As I mentioned, China probably has the worst animal welfare record of any country, yet it is known as the country of the dragon. I fear that, if dragons

existed, they too would probably be cruelly reared and cut down in their prime for their teeth and claws, or be caged throughout their life without any care or compassion. In a world in which dragons lived, the country of the dragon would be pre-eminent in their slaughter. The country of the dragon would slaughter the dragon to extinction. China's demand for ivory is a major factor in the demise of elephant and rhino populations across the world, often for alternative medicines and therapies, some with unproven benefits, and with the false claim that those and other such medicines improve libido—science has proved quite the opposite. The Chinese Government should educate their population on the threat to some of the world's most endangered and vulnerable species and unblock websites so that people may access that information themselves. Even the Tibetan antelope has been driven to the brink of extinction due to the Chinese authorities destroying its habitat with forced land use changes and unregulated hunting (HC Deb 19 November 2013a).

Here the Chinese are constructed as not only irresponsible but also as cold and merciless; they do not have any compassion and are greedy as they care more about economic gains than how they are hurting other living creatures. They are also constructed as barbaric, and as if they are controlled by desire and as believers in non-scientific cures and being willing to hurt others for this desire. It is constructed as if Chinese people need to be controlled by the Chinese Regime, but in a way which lets them explore and enjoy the Western liberal values. In other words, they are barbaric and evil because of their ignorance of the world, but this ignorance has been created by the regime, which also lies the blame with them. Hence, it is the regime, the Chinese government itself which through its control has made the population barbaric. The government are constructed almost as if it is separated from the people. This statement is interesting because it creates a contradiction between how the Chinese people and the regime are seen. During this debate, Pritchard also points out China's economic growth while emphasising the Chinese people's humanity and how that humanity is currently not a part of the regime (HC Deb 19 November 2013b). A similar statement which touches on the freedom of the human spirit is done by Tony Baldry in the debate *China*, where he constructs China as the opposite of the human and liberal British regime:

I hope that China would see that it is in its own interest to have the greatest possible access to information and that censorship is eventually self-defeating. I hope that China will come to realise sooner rather than later that bearing down on individuals' human rights is also self-defeating because ultimately, as we have seen in the Soviet bloc and elsewhere, the human spirit will eventually overcome such restrictions (HC Deb 13 January 2010b).

Hence, rather than some type of innate inhumanness in its people, the Chinese regime is mostly constructed as inhuman, systematic and cold here. This humanisation of the Chinese people works as a contrast to the regime. This is still a form of othering though; the human spirit is characterised through Western liberal values, specifically freedom, and it is the lack of this which is emphasised. The British/West already has this human spirit, but the Chinese are described as lacking it, especially when the speaker does not make a distinction between the people and the Chinese government. Moreover, emphasising the Chinese humanness is in line with Western values such as human rights, and is primarily used to criticise domestic decisions by the Chinese state, rather than as a way of seeing the Chinese as equals to themselves. Additionally, even if the MPs try to make a distinction between the Chinese regime and Chinese people, the regime itself is made up of Chinese people which makes these beliefs be about the people despite the speakers' disclaimers.

The othering of China as evil is mostly done in connection to human rights in these debates, but also to their behaviour in the international system. This starts to be more apparent as a form of techno-Orientalism, as seen in a statement by Jim Shannon in the debate *Huawei and 5G*, when China's behaviour is linked with the development of advanced technology:

China is guilty of some of the worst, barbarous, evil, surgical human rights abuses against its own citizens. The right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr Carmichael) and others have referred to the Uyghur Muslims, but it is not just them; there are also the Christians, the Falun Gong, and many other people. China has tried to re-educate them through forced labour and surveillance of what they are doing, and has used Huawei 5G to do so. Huawei has also been deeply involved in organ harvesting—commercial harvesting of organs from people who just happen to have a different faith (HC Deb 4 March 2020a).

China is both advanced and retrograde, as it is only advanced in the sense of how they are constructing advanced technology, and seen as retrograde as they are using this technology to further their evil and barbaric aims. Huawei's technology is here characterised as evil due to the purpose of its construction: to abuse people. This evilness is also put into a system with the commercialisation of organ harvesting of innocent people. The Chinese regime is threatening, bullying, and have what is seen as an evident hatred towards anything they deem as other. By focusing on these things, it is implied that the UK are not any of these. During multiple debates, particularly those concerning the South China Sea, it is also constructed as violent, with having an entire (albeit short) debate focused on the planned expansion of China's aircraft carrier

capacity (HC Deb 15 April 2013). China is perceived to seek war and armed conflicts partly through the increasing of its military capability. This attitude is also linked to their regime type, and they are perceived to have an expansionist aim in the form of colonial desires. Lord Robathan in the debate *China*, exchange China with the devil when he references the proverb, *he who supps with the devil need to have a long spoon*, which emphasises the evilness and danger of China and how the UK needs to handle China cautiously:

My Lords, we are now faced with an authoritarian and expansionist regime in China, which is buying up Africa and elsewhere, and threatening our ally Australia, as we heard, and others. It is threatening Australia for the temerity of asking for an independent inquiry into Covid-19. We have to live with China, but we need to sup with a very long spoon. Will Her Majesty's Government stand resolute with Australia, Hong Kong and others against the threatening and bullying behaviour of the Chinese regime? (HL 29 June 2020)

One, even more, evident form of othering is visible in Baroness Finlay of Llandaff's statement where she expressively constructs the UK and China as opposites (HL Deb 24 October 2019a). Focusing on forced organ harvesting done by the Chinese state, she constructs the UK as a rich and vibrant, but also non-violent, peaceful and rational society.

Those of us in rich, vibrant societies cannot understand what the perceived threat is to the communist state from people whose philosophy is non-violent and peaceful at all times. Yet now there is extensive evidence that China has been killing its Falun Gong prisoners of conscience to remove organs for commercial human transplantation. I recently met Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, chairman of the Independent Tribunal into Forced Organ Harvesting from Prisoners of Conscience in China, whose judgment makes harrowing reading. That evidence-based judgment, delivered in June this year, followed the earlier interim judgment that: 'The Tribunal's members are certain—unanimously, and sure beyond reasonable doubt—that in China forced organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience has been practised for a substantial period of time involving a very substantial number of victims'. Is it possible that some doctors could perpetrate such crimes against humanity, even at times taking organs before the person was clinically dead? Shamefully, it seems so. The tribunal's findings cannot be buried along with the bodies of the victims, so will the Government support the Bill of the noble Lord, Lord Hunt of Kings Heath, to cut off demand from any UK residents who want to participate in this transplant tourism? (HL Deb 24 October 2019a)

In this construction, rich and vibrant does not only mean in the physical sense but rather the mental state of the society – it is rich and vibrant because of its humanity, due to its inclusion of liberal values. The Chinese are thus the opposite of all this. They are irrational – they attack

non-violent groups of people for no reason. They're also greedy, and evil and these qualities are highlighted in the system of oppression and murder through the systematic harvesting of organs, which is done to people who are still alive. This is also tied back into the illegitimacy and systematic oppression in the Chinese judicial system. All of this combined ascribes China as immoral, evil and dangerous. It also positions China against humanity, against the West, which here works as a form of dehumanisation of the Chinese state, as the West who are truly human are not seen to have these qualities.

Othering in these debates has a pattern in how the MP's talk about China, particularly how they emphasise certain points which constructs themselves, and thus the UK as the better, morally good part. The UK does not pertain human rights abuses – it condemns them. The UK's construction of itself would never have re-education camps, it is not an authoritarian regime, and it is never likened with the devil (even though the UK has had similar re-education camps historically). It paints China as retrograde and imperial – which the UK does not believe itself to be anymore. Altogether, these three types of otherings together construct China as unfeeling, cold, sneaky, inhuman, untrustworthy, greedy, violent, and as both retrograde and advanced. China is produced as a selfish authoritarian regime which is missing an emotional connection to the rest of the world.

5.1.2 Modernity and Technology

Some of the liberal values perceived to make up modernity in these debates are human and animal rights, freedom, social and economic progress, advanced technology, pacifism, responsibility and international engagement in issues such as the climate crisis. The UK is seen to embody these ideals, while the Chinese regime is viewed to lack these qualities. Hence, the UK constructs itself as the modern and morally good state and China as the opposite. One of the most interesting aspects of techno-Orientalism is how China is viewed to embody a part of this modernity, namely advanced technology, and how as a consequence the UK emphasise the other values which they perceive China to lack. One example of this is seen in the debate *UK Relations with China*:

As the fastest-growing major economy in the world with an average annual growth rate of 10% over the past 30 years, China has rapidly expanded its global influence. That growth rate is likely to put its economy ahead of the United States within the next two decades. However, countries cannot exist on economic prosperity alone. People and societies make a country or a civilisation, not volatile stock markets, trade or the buying of goods and services. Yes, those things are the lifeblood of outward prosperity, but it is

the prosperity of the human spirit that helps to advance civilisations: the freedom of the individual to determine their own destiny for good or ill, to determine whether to turn left or right and what they believe and to dream, imagine, create and innovate. This is about social growth, not just economic growth. Whether China's leaders can recognise that will determine China's future and success. Markets rise and fall, but the human spirit always seeks to soar, wherever it is. (HC 19 November 2013c)

It is an unnecessarily paranoid regime—a paranoia that shows weakness not strength. The Chinese authorities need to stop imprisoning journalists and bloggers and need to either try those journalists in an open, televised court or release them from jail. China's claims to modernity need to be manifest in the updating of its freedoms and laws, not just in the updating of its roads, bridges, buildings and infrastructure. Without such changes, China's claims of modernity are false—a mirage (HC 19 November 2013b)

These two statements come from Mark Pritchard, and his rhetoric produces a techno-Orientalist discourse. The claims that China's lack of liberal values makes them ineligible to call themselves a modern state and the repeated positioning of their human rights abuses in opposition to modernity is perfectly in line with the theoretical perspective of techno-Orientalism. Pritchard's statement is focused on the regime and is building its reasoning on the established types of otherings through references to the human spirit, economic growth and paranoia. This lack of 'true' modernity is established as the Chinese regime's weakness. In this debate Pritchard not only constructs China as retrograde, irrational, manipulative, threatening and evil all at ones, he also connects this portrayal as the reason for them to be unqualified from entering Western modernity. Hence, he undermines the progress that has happened in China, calling the creation of modern infrastructure (a form of technology) a mirage, and completely rejects China as a modern state, as they have not made progress in the most important area – human rights. It shows a techno-Orientalist reasoning, how modernity is used to not only highlight the otherness of China but also to keep them othered, from becoming a country like the Western countries despite their technological advancement. According to techno-Orientalism, this is how the West uses the East to justify and reproduce its superiority. The focus Pritchard has on liberties, and both human and animal rights with cases of abuses in his statement, all contribute to this. Through this conceptualisation of modernity as liberal values, Pritchard also manages to stabilise the UK's position and identity regarding China. The UK embodies the true form of modernity through the focus on these values, which places them as morally good, and as the true progressive. This part of techno-Orientalism shows up multiple times in the analysed debates, even in the presence of other discourses such as Sinological-Orientalism. Mel Stride and Mr Jeremy Browne also refers to modernity and connects it to

human rights in the debate *China*, when both of them emphasise that further progress for China cannot be gained without the Chinese regime gaining respect for human rights (HC Deb 19 July 2011). Even if they do not focus on technology but rather economic prosperity, particularly Browne, as the prerequisite for modernity together with liberal values, their statements are based on the same reasoning and works to gatekeep modernity from China.

The modernity aspect linked to technology is clear in the debates about Huawei. Daisy Cooper in the debate *5G Network and Huawei* connects technology to threats and human rights abuses (27 January 2020c). Through Huawei, the Chinese state uses technology – one aspect of modernity – to actively perpetrate genocide. This serves to construct the UK as the morally good, and as a truly modern state because they do not use their technology to suppress parts of their population, i.e., their humanity. Similar language is used by Geraint Davies in the same debate, who also questions the UK's behaviour on these moral grounds:

Huawei surveillance technology, as practised in Xinjiang, represents a massive public security cloud that is oppressing hundreds of thousands of Muslims in what can only be described as a repressive dystopian police state. How do we justify importing tools of mass surveillance and mass oppression that could still have foreign control? It just does not seem right (HC Deb 27 January 2020a).

In his speech, he refers to China as a “repressive dystopian police state”, which also points to the ruthless, cold, and evil othering shown at the beginning of the analysis, and he uses this to push the narrative that the UK as a modern state cannot on moral grounds collaborate with China. He also presents a treacherous othering of China, where he questions the safety of the technology itself, due to its origin. The oppression is also assumed to be systematic, with the number of people that the Chinese regime is aiming to control with its technology. Similar thoughts are echoed throughout the debate.

Technology and its link to modernity are interesting. Even if technology is constructed as an aspect of modernity, particularly in the debates which concern Huawei and national security, China is still constructed as a retrograde state because of its values, while their technology is being established as something extremely advanced to the extent that the UK cannot compete with it (HC Deb 7 May 2019a). This contradiction which theoretically is present in the techno-Orientalism discourse also exists in these debates, as the Chinese state is perceived as both advanced and backwards at the same time. This is also seen in the othering of China and Chinese

people; they are themselves seen as both retrograde and advanced. The tension between retrograde/advanced in techno-Orientalism is reproduced in these debates in regard to technology. In the debates which concern the UK's use of technology from Huawei, the technology itself is discussed in different ways. The quality of the technology which Huawei offers the UK when it comes to the installation of a 5G Network is questioned by some MPs, while it is held as better than its Western competitors by others. In the debate *UK Telecoms: Huawei* Jo Platt belongs to the first group. She questions the use of Huawei not regarding its connection to the Chinese state, but rather on the quality of the technology they offer:

Turning to the substance of the question, the decision to allow Huawei's involvement in building our 5G network raises some extremely serious questions that must be answered if we are to provide the public with concrete assurances about the integrity and safety of the network. Huawei is a company known from multiple public reports from our security services to manufacture sub-optimal equipment, often at a lower than average cost. Can the Minister clarify if the equipment described just two weeks ago by the technical director of the NCSC as "very, very shoddy" will be the same equipment green-lit for deployment in our networks? (HC Deb 25 April 2019)

This could be linked to a form of techno-Orientalist discourse where China is considered to be manufactured and cheap, but it simultaneously also feeds into a distrustful narrative about China. It is a narrative which in this debate is used to discredit Huawei, and it is also connected to the treacherous othering of China; is the Chinese technology as advanced as Huawei claims? This perspective is a lot less prevalent in the debates than the framing of China as a suspicious, plotting, advanced other, but it is there as an influence in some debates. One example of how China's technology is discussed as extremely advanced is seen in how Julia Lopez speaks about how the Western states cannot keep up with China:

The Huawei case encapsulates that dilemma and highlights some of the trade-offs at play in our relations with critically important allies such as the United States. It should also make us ask why the western world got so behind in the development of 5G technology that it became reliant on Chinese telecoms firms. I would be grateful if the Minister could let us know whether there is work under way within Government and with allies to identify strategic areas in which China is gaining a competitive edge, particularly in autonomous weaponry and cyber-warfare, and how that edge might be leveraged in future (HC Deb 7 May 2019a).

China is here constructed as an actor with enormous technological capabilities, to the point that Western states no longer are able to keep up. This is then connected to a partly barbaric

othering in how Lopez immediately links China's use of technology with violence in the form of use of weapons and cyberwarfare. China is also constructed as if they are ahead of the UK, and Lopez wants to find out more exactly where and how so that they can control and change that.

5.2 Security threat

China's construction as a security threat by the United Kingdom in these debates builds onto the ideas of othering and modernity previously addressed in this analysis. There has been an increasing worry in regard to China, which is visible in the increase of debates about China in the Parliament since 2019. I have identified three ways in which China as a threat is primarily discussed in the parliament. Firstly, it is viewed as a threat by its refusal to act according to the established rules in the international system. Secondly, the exceeding influence it has in the UK, particularly concerning the 5G network is seen as threatening. Thirdly, China as the new hegemonic superpower in the world is viewed as threatening.

5.2.1 China and the International System

Throughout these debates, the MPs repeatedly discuss China's actions regarding their position in the international system. There is a specific focus on them not following the established rules, but also on their relations with other countries, like North Korea and Iran, which the British perceived as dangerous and irresponsible (HC 4 March 2020b, HL 22 November 2012b). Often, this is brought up as an argument urging the UK to react against China's behaviour. This can be seen in statements by Andrew Bowie and Tony Baldry (HC Deb 3 September 2020, HC 13 January 2010c). Rather than techno-Orientalism, these types of statements seem to primarily belong in an Orientalist discourse, which constructs the UK as morally superior to China, and show how this is used to justify their right to react against China. Bowie refers to the Western liberal values, and uses them to not only other China, but to conceptualise China as a threat against those values, and thus against the UK (HC Deb 3 September 2020). The UK constructs itself as the modern and morally good state, which makes them perceive themselves as not only allowed but also that they have a form of duty to raise and question China's actions and behaviour, both against their citizens and other states. Overall, this is the primary way China is viewed as a threat due to their actions in the international system. However, despite the prevalence of Orientalism, there is a techno-Orientalist influence in some discussions. Peter Grant in the debate *China: UK Policy* takes up China's role in the international system as he discusses China's relation to as well as treatment of other countries, including their disrespect

for others sovereignty (HC Deb 7 May 2019b, HC Deb 7 May 2019c). Here, he questions China's motives. Grant relates this to China's human rights abuses and ties the United Kingdom's humanness to the importance of human rights, i.e., modern Western values. Hence, China's ignorance and denial of others sovereignty, something that is claimed as a Western liberal value, is used to dehumanise China. Grant then links this to imperial beliefs on how this might make other countries into colony-like subjects to China.

We simply cannot give any credence to that assertion. Will the Minister give an assurance that China will not be allowed to put up a border against international and universal human rights? We have human rights because we are human, and it would be a denial of the universality of human rights if we allowed the prospect of trade deals or inward investment to silence criticism of China, or any country that shows such contempt on such a huge scale for what should be international norms of behaviour (HC Deb 7 May 2019b).

The belt and road initiative has been mentioned. Although there is no doubt that it could provide a way for the wealth generated by China's economic resurgence to be more fairly distributed, we need to ensure that it is not used simply to make China's neighbours more excessively reliant on China, to the extent that they almost become satellites or colonies. I am aware that this Parliament has not always had a proud story to tell in the history of colonialism, but it would not be in China's long-term interests for its neighbours to become so reliant that they almost cease to exist in their own right (HC Deb 7 May 2019c).

China's nature, which is seen as evil, greedy, irrational, inhuman and to an extent imperial, all contribute to what the Parliament believe China's aim to be. China's rise in the international system, which has led to them becoming an economic powerhouse, is not seen as something they have rightfully earned, but rather as something they have cheated themselves to. They have somehow broken the rules of the system and are therefore seen as threatening. This influence how all their actions on the international level is perceived by Britain, and how the UK reacts and discusses matters related to China. This perception of China as a threat through its understood otherness is built on Orientalist and techno-Orientalist ideas, which is visible in how Grant alludes to ideas of humanity in connection to human rights. By letting China go against human rights, the UK will lose its own humanity, as they will lose their morals. It also alludes that China already has lost this humanity, as they are actively going against human rights. This is then used to express the worry that the UK and the West are losing their powers in the international system – with China who is taking over. This worry about how the system will be and on how much power both the UK and other Western countries will have if China takes over from the US as the new superpower is thus influenced by techno-Orientalist ideas.

The othering of China as evil and manipulative is commonly used when the MPs discuss the technological threat of China, i.e., Chinese companies like Huawei which are closely tied to the Chinese government. In the debate, *Huawei and 5G*, Sir Iain Duncan Smith use the othering of China as an evil mastermind, when he connects how China is producing technology for other ‘evil’ states and how they are using it themselves, as the reason China’s actions are threatening. Ideas of China’s secretive and treacherous nature, which are already established in the Parliament is apparent in the construction of China as it is not questioned, but rather echoed by other MPs. In this statement, Sir Iain Duncan Smith also connects one aspect of modernity – advanced technology – to the threatening image of China. It indicates how China through technology is increasing its influence on other like-minded countries and pursues human rights abuses, and takes a literal form of how untrustworthy they are already in the first sentences where he answers the former speaker, Damian Green, who likens and questions Huawei’s owner structure with John Lewis:

It is either absurd or I will have to review my purchase from John Lewis. My socks might even be bugged! My right hon. Friend is exactly right. I want to make this point, which often goes missing in this debate. Huawei is also seen as a national security threat. It continues to deal extensively with Iran without full public knowledge of how; it built a mobile network for North Korea; and it is providing security surveillance and censoring systems to authoritarian regimes, not least the Chinese Government. It has long been documented that Huawei has a long and intimate history with the Chinese security services, and there are issues around the security systems that have been provided for them, which are now being used, I think, to suppress the Uyghur people. I have real concerns about that (HC Deb 4 March 2020b).

Here China through Huawei is constructed as the evil mastermind. The techno-Orientalist idea that China wants and is on its way to create a dystopian future is echoed in how technology is approached. Particularly, in this statement, Huawei’s use of technology is highlighted through how it is used and spread to other countries the British view as threatening. Huawei is then connected to the Chinese state explicitly, and the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Chinese regime. This is how the Chinese use of technology on a more global level is linked to the image of China as a threat in these debates.

5.2.2 China’s Influence in the United Kingdom

There is an increasing worry in these debates about the influence China have in the UK, and what this means for UK’s national security. Primarily this is seen in discussions about the

creation of a 5G network in the UK. The 5G network is discussed with the belief that it is the technology of the future and is constructed as something dangerous due to China's involvement. There is also a worry that close allies, other Western countries like the US, will no longer be willing to share their intelligence with the UK if they let Huawei install their 5G network. This worry is expressed through an othering of China which is primarily grounded in beliefs on how China is treacherous, cunning and greedy. One example of this is by Alex Sobel, who likens Huawei and China with a wolf:

According to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute: "Huawei works directly with the Chinese Government's Public Security Bureau in Xinjiang on a range of projects." We know that Huawei is collaborating with the Chinese Government to build mass surveillance to target the Uyghur people. Why are we rolling out the red carpet to Huawei? It has shown little concern about human rights violations. Its company policy asks: "Is it legal within the countries in which we operate?" That is its criterion. It says it is for others to make a judgment on whether that is right or wrong. Is that the kind of company we want at the heart of our infrastructure? On workers' rights, we know that Huawei mistreats not only the Uyghurs, but its own workers. It operates a 'wolf' work culture of long hours and brutal workplace norms. Hours are so long that new employees are given mattresses to collapse on. The wolf culture encourages employees to break and bend rules. It means that the company uses the police against its own workers, with some being imprisoned for months and months. Huawei will not hesitate to break the trust that the Government have placed in them if it thinks it will benefit the company. The Government can choose to release the wolf into our country, but they cannot be surprised if they then get bitten (HC Deb 4 March 2020c).

This statement in the debate *Huawei and 5G* shows how this distrustful, evil and treacherous othering of China is used to securitise Huawei's involvement in the 5G network in the UK. China is described as if they do not have any morals and are once again connected to human rights. Sobel's metaphor paints a picture of how Huawei is not only treating its employees ruthlessly but also how they are actively manipulating and using other countries systems to punish them. If Huawei is treating its 'own' in this way, what is to say that they will treat the UK in a fair and good way? The use of this image of Huawei as the wolf is used to emphasise the threat China poses towards the UK's infrastructure and national security, and how the UK could be treated if they let China construct their 5G network. Multiple speakers in this debate contribute to this image of China. Richard Drax states that if the UK let China into their system, they will never get them out (HC Deb 4 March 2020d). Graham Stringer focuses on how Huawei have undermined the UK's market with how they offer the technology at an extremely cheap price and sees this as an attempt of China to take control over the market (HC Deb 4

March 2020e). He's statement cement this image of China as an evil mastermind and points to the security risk by giving Huawei more direct power in the UK's system. Sir Iain Duncan Smith echoes these ideas and shows an othering of China as dangerous when he likens the UK's dependency on Chinese technology with addiction and sees that as something they need to be rehabilitated and cured of (HC Deb 4 March 2020d, HC Deb 4 March 2020e). Overall, this fits into Huang, Niu, and Roh's argument of how China is reproduced as a form of a sinister agent who is plotting to take over the world through the facilitation and use of technology.

This is also seen in other debates. One example is by Lord Dobbs who characterize China in similar ways, as untrustworthy, greedy and inadequate; through his use of the word endemic, this is constructed as something that is a part of the Chinese nature (HL Deb 7 November 2013). The clearest influence of techno-Orientalism is visible in Tom Tugendhat statements from the debate 5G Network and Huawei, where he directly calls the entirety of China's influence on the UK dangerous. He relates their influence not only to their technological superiority but also to their cultural influence. Tugendhat argues that the code itself, the technology created in China is dangerous because it will bring Chinese values to the UK.

We have not yet addressed what will be an important issue going forward, which is the simple fact that just as we write laws in this place to shape the culture of society, we shape the culture of our systems by writing code. The code that is being written today in places like Shenzhen is going to shape the culture of our communication systems and the way in which they act together. This may sound like it is simply a question of noughts and ones—a mathematical process that is devoid of culture—but that is simply not true. Even supposedly neutral systems like accountancy rely on concepts of ownership, individuality, privacy, collectivity or state interference that are culturally specific. That is as true of accountancy today as it was when it was first created, several hundred years ago on these islands. The code that is now being written will have the same implications, so the real decision for us is not just “What are we looking at today in our 5G network, and how much influence will it have on the systems that we seek to operate now and in the immediate future?” but “What cultural norms are we embedding into our society that will shape the concepts of liberty and individuality”—concepts that I thought we held dear? (HC Deb 4 March 2020a)

This statement shows how multiple ideas in the techno-Orientalist discourse coexist and build onto each other. Through the othering of China and the focus on their values which even makes them inhuman, this cultural influence wielded by China is not only unwanted, it is even constructed as dangerous to the British identity. Tugendhat relates this technology to the British accounting system and argues that how the British have previously influenced the world

through systems will be how China is now going to influence the Brits. And this Chinese influence will make the Western values, like liberty, sovereignty and individuality tainted with the Chinese otherness, and make them lose their true meaning. A techno-Orientalist perspective helps us understand why he reacts so strongly towards this, and why this connection between technology and Western values exists and is expressed in the way it is.

5.2.3 China as a Superpower

Throughout these debates, there is a consensus that China is on its way to become the leading superpower in the world and there is an insecurity about what type of world they will create with their newfound power. One example of this is Tobias Ellwood who states:

We are in a period of constant conflict. The character of war is changing, with terrain being replaced by the digital as the prize. This question is not about today; it is about long-term security and where China is going. In our lifetimes, it will become more militarily, technologically and economically powerful than any other country in the world. It is already causing the splintering of the internet. Does not the issue of Huawei raise bigger questions about where China is going and about the need for greater transparency on the international stage? (HC Deb 27 January 2020b)

China is becoming more and more dominant and as a result, the world is becoming less and less stable. Ellwood's view of the current state of the world is linked to two things – technology and China. Even if China right now is only causing havoc in the digital space with their technology, it will push this chaos into the real world – and it has already started with it in armed conflicts. This view is linked to different otherings of China as barbaric, advanced and untrustworthy. China's untrustworthiness is clear in how Ellwood links this future with transparency – it is seen as something which China is fundamentally lacking. He stresses that the UK needs to focus on long-term decision-making because China is becoming even stronger in areas such as technology, military and economy, and this is seen as a dangerous development. Lord Moynihan expresses similar sentiments in the debate *China: Air Defence Identification Zone*, where he acknowledges a power shift from the West to the East, to China, and links this to the demise of Western values (HL Deb 16 January 2014). This is also a decline of the Western modernity, and China is constructed as a threat to the entire international system the Western states have built.

Another example of this fear of China as the superpower is seen in Martin Horwood's statement in the debate UK Relations with China:

The overall picture is one of an enormous global power awakening and becoming a superpower once again. All its potential partners appear to have a working assumption that it will always exercise its power benignly. We are somewhat like rabbits caught in the economic headlights: we see the enormous value of trade and business, and we are so worried about any risks to it—particularly after the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister met the Dalai Lama, resulting in the freezing of relations with top officials for several years—that we try to brush the complex picture of policy I have described under the carpet in the pursuit of economic relationships (HC Deb 19 November 2013d).

Here Horwood creates a picture of the UK as naive and being caught in a trap by China. This is built on an othering of China as an evil mastermind, as suspicious and manipulative as well as dangerous, and this conceptualisation of China enhances the danger of China. It also assumes the position that if China becomes the hegemonic superpower, they have somehow tricked and manipulated the West into them giving them that position, rather than having ‘rightfully’ earned it. Another example with similar thinking is by Yasmin Qureshi who connects the evilness of China with a dystopic technologically controlled present, as she ties them to parts of Western modernity (HC Deb 7 May 2019e). In addition to producing China as evil, she links them to being against liberal Western values, primarily equality and freedom, and as creators of technology which is discriminatory and restrictive in its nature. In the form of this advanced technology, China is already in the future, while the West is about to wake up in this oppressive future that has crept upon them. This “intentional mass racial profiling through artificial intelligence” (HC Deb 7 May 2019e) is constructed as something which China is actively spreading, and the West is lagging behind and is only now discovering the danger of China through its technology. All of these statements fit into a techno-Orientalist narrative which puts China as an entity which makes the West lose its rightful place in the hierarchy, and this loss will destroy Western modernity.

The concern and worry of a future with China as the superpower is also seen in a statement by Fiona Bruce in the debate *China: UK Policy* as she discusses human rights abuses, and constructs China as an entity which will only become eviler and eviler, and as a consequence, they will turn the world evil as well (HC Deb 7 May 2019d). This way of describing and understanding China’s actions, through an othering of them as evil, is extremely present when discussing the uncertainty of the future. Lord Alton of Liverpool also alludes to this when he discusses Hong Kong and talks about how the current oppressive regime in China will be the future in Hong Kong as well:

I heard their fears that religious persecution will be visited again on Hong Kong. President Xi may not yet have a Little Red Book, but he has replaced the 10 commandments with his sayings. In addition to the lack of religious freedom, churches, mosques and temples have been shut or demolished, leaders imprisoned and surveillance cameras installed. The European Parliament described the situation as “a new low”. Writing about surveillance, George Orwell famously said in Nineteen Eighty-Four: “Big brother is watching you”. But not just watching—Orwell said: “If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—for ever”. and that: “The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history”. For Buddhists in Tibet and Muslim Uighurs in Xinjiang, Xi’s Sinicisation programme seeks to do just that. To ensure that their history is obliterated, over 40 Uighur cemeteries have been destroyed, with bones and ancestors’ remains scattered. At the APPG for Uighurs, of which I am vice-chairman, we heard disturbing evidence about the vile incarceration of 1 million Uighur Muslims, for them to be re-educated, brainwashed, intimidated, and reprogrammed. We have also seen disturbing evidence suggestive of why Uighur DNA is tested. Falun Gong practitioners told a parliamentary hearing how bodies have been turned into sources of forced human organ harvesting (HL Deb 24 October 2019b).

Here Lord Alton not only view China as a threat towards Hong Kong and China’s own population, but he also discusses Chinese minorities such as Uighurs and Falun Gong in terms which produces them as resources to and made by the Chinese state. The Chinese regime actively turns these people into expendable resources by making them more Chinese and erasing their culture, by reprogramming them. He also describes a technology-driven oppressive future at the hands of China, which is in line with a techno-Orientalist view of how the West views the future in the hands of an Eastern other: controlling, silencing and violent. This view of the future produced here thus includes a world where the West are at risk of becoming a part of the machinery of the Chinese regime. Techno-Orientalism puts forward a future where the Eastern other is constructed as suspicious, manipulative, evil, barbaric and less-than-human, which is plotting to make the West lose its rightful place at the top of the hierarchy in the world, thus leading the world onto a path of evil destruction. The othering of China which is normalised in these debates makes these types of statements which links qualities to China’s actions not only believable but also true. The influence of techno-Orientalism in regard to this perception of China as a threat is visible in how the future is discussed, as it is framed as a technologically controlled future which will change the world and bring about the demise of the West’s liberal values.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

China is described in techno-Orientalism terms differently across the debates, with a larger focus on dehumanising aspects in the earlier debates through the rejection of China's entry into modernity and the Western sphere, and more as a national security threat to the UK in the latter. There has also been an increasing worry in regard to China, which is visible in the increase of debates about China in the Parliament since 2019. This theoretical perspective helps with understanding why there is a focus on modernity, and on how their argumentation is influenced by these otherings of China. It is mostly visible through the consistent othering of China throughout these debates. However, the only times techno-Orientalism seems to be the dominating discourse is during discussions about Huawei – discussions which concern both national security and technology. This is in line with the theory, as it is mostly applicable to those types of discussions. However, there are traces of it in discussions about general policy as well, primarily when it is focused on the future – which is also in line with the theoretical perspective. Out of the three ways in which China is primarily discussed as a security threat, Techno-Orientalism seems to be less present in discussions about China's behaviour in the international system. There purely Orientalist otherings are more dominant.

Furthermore, techno-Orientalism show how the West is creating new reasons to keep the current power structure with the West as superior to the East. It shows how the UK perceives Eastern countries as inferior, and on how that influences how the representation of China is constructed and reproduced in these debates. When it cannot keep its superiority through technology, it creates a new criterion for modernity: these liberal Western values which are designed to show how the West is morally superior to the East. And this is seen in the debates, particularly whenever human rights are brought up.

How can this be used to understand the questions posed in the introduction? Techno-Orientalism as a discourse in the British Parliament does not only other China but also interprets and uses this othering to emphasise the danger of any action China takes. Hence, China's actions are almost always seen as threatening. Ueno argues that the primary function for techno-Orientalism is for the West to preserve its identity in its imagination of the future. This is visible in how the British parliament (re)produces China. Debates about China are influenced by ideas of modernity and of how different China are from the UK while at the same time the UK does not seem to be capable of understanding China's motivations outside of themselves. This can

be seen in the statements about China's aim, which is always seen as them pursuing things which the UK had when they were a great power – colonies, power while having a general disrespect for human rights and other countries sovereignty. Techno-Orientalism allows the UK to keep othering China, which produces the UK as morally superior, good and wise, and China as dangerous, evil, suspicious, ruthless, retrograde and advanced. This creates and affects a techno-Orientalist discourse which influences how China is perceived as a threat in the Parliament. Hence, the answer to the research question *How is the British discourse of China as a security threat influenced by techno-Orientalism?* is that it is mainly influenced through ideas of otherings. Primarily otherings which (re)produces China as cold and ruthless, treacherous and suspicious, and manipulative and evil in connection to technology and modernity. There are mainly three ways in which China is viewed as a threat; by their behaviour in the international system, their growing influence in the UK, and on how they will act as a superpower. As shown in the analysis, in all three of these perceptions, there are elements of techno-Orientalism, but the influence appears to be stronger and more consistent on issues connected to technology. Techno-Orientalism is by no means the dominating discourse, but it is still present and extremely visible whenever technology and the future are discussed in relation to China. It is visible in how the security threats themselves allude and are connected to otherings of China which have techno-Orientalist characteristics. It is visible in how modernity is constructed in these debates, and on how modernity primarily in the form of Western values are used to dehumanise and Other China. And finally, it is visible in how China is dehumanised and on how their danger is connected to their technological superiority, and on how this in itself is viewed as dangerous as it is assumed that China will use their technology to create an oppressive and violent future which will spread from its own people to the rest of the world.

Why is this important? I argue that the beliefs about the dangers of China to the UK expressed by the MPs not necessarily in themselves are techno-Orientalism; rather it is how these beliefs build on ideas of dehumanisation and are constructing China and Chinese people as other signs of techno-Orientalism. As long as China is viewed as Other through a cloudy mist of our own conceptions about them, it is impossible to regard them as anything else as it is all based on our beliefs about them. However, misconceptions, as well as our own beliefs about China, are inevitable; the most we can do is to be aware of them. Stein argues that incomplete generalisations which are based on the decision-makers bias have an impact on their judgement. The same is true for researchers. Hopefully, this theoretical perspective can help with

understanding why some things are seen as threatening, and help with our understanding of why China is seen as particularly threatening to the West. Hough in his study described how the United States viewed Japan as “technologically adept, modern, chivalrous, and civilized, yet savage and ultimately an existential threat to the West” (Hough 2015, 31). Throughout these debates these ideas are present. China is viewed as a threat by how they are perceived to be able to influence and change the UK’s values and way of life through technology both by their influence inside the UK, as well as in the international system and on how China might create a future which will kill the humanness in the UK.

This thesis has aimed to increase the understanding of how China is seen as a security threat in the UK. This theoretical perspective can help us understand why China is perceived as especially threatening to the UK, and even if it does not tell us anything about China, it increases our understanding of how the UK and the West understand China. This study was also an attempt to see if techno-Orientalism could tell us something in the study of political science and security studies. And based on this analysis, I believe that it can be a useful perspective as it can help us further our understanding of how the West perceives Eastern countries, particularly China, as threatening. Therefore, this is a theoretical perspective which should be included in future research about threats and the West, in relation to China and other countries which are produced through this techno-Orientalist discourse. Is there a techno-Orientalist influence on how the West perceive not only a superpower such as China but other Eastern countries as well, such as India or Singapore? Another interesting angle would be to look at techno-Orientalism from a gendered perspective, as there exists a lot of research on how Orientalism is a gendered discourse so similar studies would be interesting regarding a techno-Orientalist discourse. Overall, more research is needed to help us understand the Western perspective of other countries, and on how that affects the West’s actions and reactions to those countries.

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