

Legitimacy Deficit: Chinese Leadership at the United Nations

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Abstract This paper examines the likelihood of China's legitimation as the global hegemon during an era of relative U.S. decline. Using Rapkin's (1990) legitimacy deficit framework, the author tests China's prospects for international legitimacy through the analysis of Chinese leadership at the United Nations (UN). While China's recent exponential increase in contributions to UN peacekeeping and the UN regular budget signal growing Chinese global leadership, their consistent focus on regional interests, as displayed in UN Security Council and UN General Assembly debate and discussion, indicates the absence of an internationally supported agenda. In concluding, this paper asserts that recent Chinese legitimation efforts through UN leadership have been stonewalled by an inability to provide an international agenda with globally held values and beliefs.

Keywords Legitimacy · China · United Nations · Leadership · Multilateralism

Introduction

Many scholars maintain that the United States has lost some international leadership in recent years. This relative decline derives from issues including, an economic recession, domestic political gridlock, unilateral use of force abroad, among many others. This apparent degeneration of U.S. leadership has prompted numerous questions by scholars regarding the international legitimacy of the United States as the global hegemonic power. Is the United States' hegemonic power waning? Are there emerging powers looking to take over the unipolar leadership role the United States once held? Who are these emerging powers and is there an opportunity for global political structural change? Many of these questions have already been considered by political science scholars, who have only more recently been inquiring whether or not

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the United States will continue to be the global hegemon. However, these are only a sample of the innumerable amount of questions concerning U.S. leadership decline, and as research progresses additional questions will become evident and necessary to propose.

In this article I will address several of these questions through an examination of one highly suspected emerging power that could threaten U.S. global leadership: China. The exponentially prosperous economy that China has experienced in recent years coupled with the recent U.S. economic crisis begs the question, will China be the next world hegemon, and can they obtain the international legitimacy to do so? Throughout this article I will apply the legitimacy deficit framework, developed by Rapkin [15], to China in order to further gauge the likelihood of U.S. delegitimation and China legitimation in the current international political structure. The term legitimacy deficit can be summarized as, a lack of acceptance from needed followers (states) due to the absence of an agenda that serves broadly held values and interests, and on the contrary solely focuses on narrow national interests. This well established framework has been cited in and applied to numerous scholarly research studies since its inception [5,18,20]. The framework's wide range of application to international studies provides this legitimacy measurement with validity and overall scholarly importance.

As political science scholarship has begun to address the apparent, but gradual, international political decline of the U.S. leadership, attempts at further understanding the reasons why the decline is occurring, and if the United States is vulnerable to an emerging power, have become burning topics for political science research within the sub-field of international relations. Broad comprehension of such an issue must originate from extensive research on the subject area, including the observation of many different variables of U.S. decline relating to the concepts of hegemony, polarity, and legitimacy. The legitimacy deficit is one of these variables, and using it as a guiding framework I will be able to either support or deny the opportunity that China has to supplant itself as the new international superordinate power. In more practical terms, a change in world leadership at the top would equate a fundamentally different global political structure that would cause new state tensions, and open the door to scenarios that could include global economic crises and international warfare.

Global Leadership and Hegemonic Legitimacy

Global leadership roles can be defined and contained relatively successfully in one global political systems model developed and entitled the 'long cycle of global politics' by Modelski [14]. In this seminal article, Modelski crafted a model to explain the international political structures that seemed to consistently develop following global wars. Through a simple but internally complex model the author is able to predict the cycle of global superpowers or hegemonies through five distinct steps. Summarized by Schweller and Pu [19] the cycle is as follows, (1) a stable global structure with a legitimate hegemon, (2) delegitimation of the hegemon by an emerging power, (3) emerging power weapons collection and alliance formation, (4) resolution of state tensions, generally through hegemonic warfare, and (5) the creation of a new global structure with a new legitimate leader. Every aspect of this model

could be tested separately through case study analysis, but my continued focus will be on the legitimization and delegitimation of a hegemon.

The concept of state legitimacy can be examined through two lenses each described by John Ikenberry and Charles Kupchan, as “normative and cognitive” [9]. The normative component is created when a consensus within the global political order is made in which every state understands their role in the system and how to maintain the system. The cognitive element states that nations within the system adopt similar normative values through socialization and learning techniques [9]. These two components of legitimacy create the opportunity for legitimate domination of the system to take place, and therefore birth the hegemonic power. Hegemonic legitimacy can also be described at a more basic level to provide clearer comprehension as an actor who “...is recognized as the rightful wielder of power, exerciser of authority, maker and interpreter of rules, or user of force, and who thereby warrants support and compliance” [16]. This definition is based upon three key principles; perceptions or beliefs, oughtness, and consent. Each of these principles act as shared interests among states in the global political system, and therefore denote an entity as legitimate, and in regard to this article, a legitimate hegemon.

According to Gilpin [6], in order to attain this legitimacy, or “right to rule”, an international power must achieve three specific objectives, (1) a military victory in a hegemonic war, and from that, the ability to impose its will upon other states, (2) the production of certain global public goods such as global security or a valuable economic order, and (3) ideological, religious, or value acceptance among a set of states. This study’s application of the legitimacy deficit framework closely mirrors Gilpin’s theory of hegemonic war and legitimization excluding the first objective, a military victory in a hegemonic war. Both frameworks indicate a need for wide spread acceptance of ideology, and global public good production, however, since China has not had a recent military conflict on a global scale, this specific objective cannot be assessed fully. Therefore, in the case of China, the application of Rapkin’s legitimacy deficit framework could be, to a degree, interchangeable with Gilpin’s model of international political change.

Prior to any international structural change, an emerging power must first delegitimize the global hegemon’s international authority and power. The concept of delegitimation derives from Modelski’s long cycle model [14] previously summarized as the second step in the long cycle model. Walt [28] directly discusses what delegitimation is and how it can be imposed onto a hegemon. Delegitimation does not directly challenge hegemonic power, but rather it seeks to make other actors begrudge its power so that the actor is more likely to attempt to dethrone the hegemon so to speak. This notion of delegitimation can be imposed onto the hegemon through four distinct sources of international legitimacy, (1) conformity with established procedures, (2) actions that create positive outcomes for other states, (3) conformity to globally recognized moral norms, and (4) the legitimacy is consistent with the “natural” order of the global society [28]. Each of these sources of legitimacy can be used to delegitimize a hegemon if it can be proven that the hegemon has violated one or more of these basic sources of international legitimacy.

Schweller and Pu [19] used delegitimation as their focus variable in a case study analysis of China, examining specifically how they are slowly delegitimizing the United States as the global hegemonic power. The authors identified four types of

delegitimizing resistance practices the Chinese are currently utilizing on the United States. The four resistance practices include, putting forth competing values into the global system, cost-imposing strategies, such as voting against the U.S. in an international organization, slowly forming a competing ideological movement through rebellious speeches and the like, and lastly temporarily accepting the hegemon, but using authorized channels in the global political system to undermine the U.S. [19]. These resistance strategies provide a practical example of how delegitimation is currently being utilized in the international political system, bringing the concept of delegitimation to life.

A brief introduction and discussion of polarity and its impacts on the global political system is necessary for contextual purposes and to further aid in understanding the important concepts in this article. Polarity can be easily defined as the number of major actors that exist within a global political system [17]. There are three commonly discussed polarity types within the global political system; unipolarity, bipolarity, and multipolarity representing one major power, two major powers, and multiple or more than two major powers respectively [17]. Unipolarity is by far the rarest of the three polarity types; however arguments have surfaced among scholars that claim the existence of each polarity type in our current global political system. Layne [12] argued that a unipolar global structure will only last for a short time period and will inevitably become a multipolar system that includes several powerful state actors. Layne stated that between the years 2000–2010, the global political system would become multipolar, and in many respects this supposition cannot be refuted. The current global political system is multipolar in that numerous actors play a major role, including states, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, corporations, and many others. The current global structure does appear, in some respects, to be in an age of multipolarity, but rather than just state actors, as Layne expected, the prevailing powers include several classifications of organizations.

While Layne [12] described the grim future of unipolarity, many other realist scholars still claim its existence and necessity for a peaceful international structure. During Harrison's [8] discussion of realism and its contradicting theoretical assumptions about unipolarity he described one of the key realist arguments for unipolar dominance, most closely attributed to Wohlforth [30]. Wohlforth maintained that a unipolar international system provides a stable political structure that has the prospect of lasting decades, while a multipolar structure built upon alliance formation is both costly and unproductive [8].

In addition to the Schweller and Pu's [19] case study analysis, further examination of the existing literature on the Chinese perspective of world leadership is necessary to have full and clear picture of their role in the global political system. Buzan [1] studies the likelihood of China rising to a world leadership role without much conflict and suggests that it is quite feasible. Buzan does not perceive China becoming the next world hegemon since their political attention is ostensibly focused exclusively on regional level power with little to no explicit consideration of global power. Buzan's findings may be deemed slightly contradictory to the Schweller and Pu's delegitimation findings, but both can be useful moving forward in that they each provide unique perceptions of China's international objectives and goals.

Similar to Buzan, Johnston [11] examines whether or not China is a status or revisionist state. Johnston suggests the Chinese state has become much more

integrated into the current global political system than ever before, and in turn appears to be a status-quo nation and not a revisionist one [11]. However, China may be operating under the resistance practice discussed by Schweller and Pu, in which China will slowly delegitimize the U.S., and over time be more recognizable as a revisionist state. These conflicting scholarly perspectives beg the question; does China want to be global leader in the first place?

According to Wang Jisi, Dean of the School of International Studies at Peking University, it would be “foolhardy” for China to “directly” contest the current international political structure, and also rather unlikely [10]. This sentiment indicates that China may continue to use the current international structure to their advantage, and prosper economically without directly pursuing global power and leadership. China has displayed, to an extent, some global leadership, specifically economic, cultural, and political influence, through trade relationships with developing African nations. Chinese trade with Africa has increased quite dramatically in recent years, and from this interaction Africa is both economically and politically influenced by China due to the fact that nearly all of Africa consists of developing nations looking for foreign economic and political models to mimic [19,29]. However, this global influence is, as stated, limited to developing nations, making it difficult to argue that China is gaining international legitimacy from these trade relationships and interactions.

Although Chinese global influence is somewhat suspect, China has shown undeniably strong regional influence through multiple multilateral organizations. The 1997 Asian financial crisis was overcome in part due to China’s ability to stabilize the region’s finances, and promote the creation and development of ASEAN plus Three, a forum for economic and financial security discussion. Other multilateral organizations of which China is a member include, the Asian Pacific Economic and Cooperation forum (APEC), the Asian Development Bank, and the World Trade Organization [4]. North Korea’s nuclear expansion has been one of China’s top agenda items, specifically in 2005 China helped to create and hosted the six-party talks on North Korea denuclearization [3]. Each of these multilateral organizations and forums indicate strong regional influence, but Chinese global leadership is definitely in question, and whether or not China wants to become a global power is up for continued debate. Continued research is needed to further many of the arguments made in the previous articles, and this study intends on adding to the discussion of Chinese leadership in the global political system.

This particular research most resembles Rapkin’s [15] work. Similar to Rapkin, I will be applying his framework, the legitimacy deficit, but I will apply it to the case of China, and not Japan as Rapkin completed. Rapkin focused on the economic approaches of Japan and its relation to world leadership; I will do the same for China. However, I will put a greater emphasis on international organizations, specifically examining China’s leadership within the United Nations (UN). Then using the data collected I intend to estimate the prospects of Chinese global leadership through the application of the legitimacy deficit framework.

In sum, this case study analysis and application of the legitimacy deficit framework to Chinese international leadership is unique and distinctive from previous leadership assessments. This new addition to the field of political science will strengthen existing literature and provide new findings regarding China as an emerging power in the current global political system.

Data and Methods

I conduct a case study analysis of Chinese global leadership using the legitimacy deficit framework developed by Rapkin [15]. Extensive exploration into China's leadership as a member of the UN will provide the opportunity to suggest the possibility, or lack thereof, of China not only becoming an influential leader in the global political system, but a hypothetical hegemon steering the international system as a whole. As indicated by Wuthnow et al. [31], "The way in which China behaves within institutions is treated as an indicator of the type of rising power that China is..." Therefore, examining Chinese leadership in the UN will indicate whether or not China has the ability to become an integral leader within the global political structure. More specifically, I examine China's leadership through consideration of voting records on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), China's pursuit, or lack thereof, in shaping the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) agenda, troop and monetary support of global peacekeeping missions, and financial contributions to the UN regular budget. The UNSC voting records and UNGA agenda shaping measures are examined from 2006 to the present, while the other two measures of leadership cover the last two decades beginning in the 1990s and continuing through the present day.

The UNSC voting records analysis will consider Chinese abstentions. At first glance abstentions do not seem to be related to international leadership legitimacy, but the examined abstentions indicate the presence or absence of particular leadership qualities through an analysis of the Chinese delegation's statements and the reactions of the other UNSC members. Including these four measurements will account for the many aspects of leadership that exist within the UN, and produce the greatest opportunity for an accurate consideration of the Chinese legitimacy deficit prospect.

Inherent in case study analysis is the lack of generalizable findings, however, the counter balance to this flaw is the critical importance of this particular case study to our current international political system. With the United States' leadership role declining, a window of opportunity has been opened for an emerging power, in this case China, to attempt to alter the current global political system and crown their selves the global hegemon. This particular case was chosen for practicality purposes, its current scholarly importance, and because it will follow somewhat closely with the methodology used by Rapkin through his application of the legitimacy deficit framework. The data that will be analyzed focuses on global leadership in an international organization providing an excellent platform to test China's overall global legitimacy.

As discussed previously, China has illustrated both global and regional leadership through international trade and regional multilateral forums and organizations. Following an examination of these leadership measurements it became obvious that for the most part China's central leadership strength is regional only. So, this research tests whether this particular inference is true when it comes to leadership within the United Nations as well.

On the whole, this case study provides not only contextual and background information necessary for further research, but creates a foundation upon which more extensive quantitative research studies can be completed if necessary. However, when using this particular framework, case study analysis is the proper methodology selection and will produce the optimum results and findings.

UNSC Voting Implications

From the years 2006 to the present the UNSC has conducted votes on hundreds of resolutions ranging from the expansion of previous mandates, specific sanctions on nations, and individuals found to have committed egregious offenses. During this time frame China did not vote against any of the resolutions, but more importantly, they did vote to abstain on nine of the resolutions [25]. The below abstentions, indicated on table one, impart particular leadership qualities, or lack thereof, that China has displayed through an analysis of after vote commentary by both the Chinese delegation and other UNSC member states. Four of the abovementioned abstentions provide a window into China's international political beliefs and commitments, and from them I will discuss the implications that can be drawn regarding China's capability of international legitimacy (Table 1).

In the case of resolution 1757 in 2007, China was one of five abstention votes regarding the creation of a special tribunal to try suspects in the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. The Chinese representative, Wang Guangya, argued for a continued independent investigation in to the situation, and believed that the tribunal was a domestic matter for Lebanon [25]. Although this

Table 1 UNSC Chinese abstention votes 2006–2012

UNSC Resolution number and year	Resolution description	Final vote
Resolution 1672 (2006)	Travel and Financial Restrictions on Sudanese individuals for their involvement in the Darfur Conflict	12-0-3; abstentions: China, Russia, and Qatar
Resolution 1680 (2006)	Encourages Syria to reply positively to Lebanon's request to delineate borders and develop diplomatic relations	13-0-2; abstentions: China and Russia
Resolution 1706 (2006)	Expansion of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) mandate to include deployments in Darfur, Sudan	12-0-3; abstentions: China, Russia, and Qatar
Resolution 1757 (2007)	Authorization of special tribunal to try suspects charged with the assassination of Lebanon's Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri	10-0-5; abstentions: China, Indonesia, Russia, South Africa, and Qatar
Resolution 1907 (2009)	Sanctions against Eritrea for involvement in Somalia and for the failure to remove troops from Djibouti	13-1-1; against: Libya; abstention: China
Resolution 1945 (2010)	Extension of an expert panel monitoring sanctions against several groups in Darfur, Sudan	14-0-1; abstention: China
Resolution 1973 (2011)	Authorizes the use of a no-fly zone over Libya	10-0-5; abstentions: Brazil, China, Germany, India, and Russia
Resolution 2023 (2011)	Sanctions against Eritrea to prevent them from using their mining production as a financial tool to destabilize the Horn of Africa	13-0-2; abstentions: China and Russia
Resolution 2068 (2012)	Sanctions on armed groups persistently violating the human rights of children	11-0-5; abstentions: Azerbaijan, China, Pakistan, and Russia

UNSC Resolutions: <http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/index.shtml>

position does display the right of sovereignty for the nation of Lebanon, the context from which this decision was made demonstrates a somewhat sundry implication. In 2007 Lebanon was in the midst of political turmoil following the 2006 Lebanese War that resulted in thousands of Lebanese deaths. Throughout the war and over the next few years there were attempts to install a new government, resulting in internal conflict amongst different religious and cultural groups. Within this context, China's demand for sovereignty in this case was illogical to many of the members on the UNSC. There was a consensus among those members who voted in the affirmative, including the United States, that all options for a regional solution were exhausted, and in order to promote peace, this decision had to be made [27]. In an implicit response to China's assertions the representative of the United Kingdom stated,

This is not a capricious intervention or interference in the domestic political affairs of a sovereign state. It is a considered response by the Council, properly taken, to a request from the Government of Lebanon for action to overcome a continued impasse in Lebanon's internal procedures, despite long and serious efforts to find a solution within Lebanon [27].

Similar statements were made among all of the member states that voted to pass this resolution. This obvious contradiction between some of the world's most influential nations and China indicates a stark difference in global political beliefs, conceivably delivering a setback to Chinese global legitimacy efforts.

On a separate note, three separate resolutions, two from 2006 and one from 2009, represent a slightly different view of Chinese international leadership. In each of these resolutions, as can be argued in the resolution above, Chinese leadership asserted the right of sovereignty for those nations involved, and in turn attempted to delineate power to the regional actors at play in each resolution. The Chinese representative's post vote commentary regarding resolution 1680 in 2006 asserted that, "... in international relations, the principle of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference should be upheld" [26]. This statement rang true for resolution 1672 and resolution 1907 as well, and provide an interesting insight into what China is attempting to achieve through these abstentions [27]. The right of sovereignty is a globally accepted entitlement that has in recent times lost some of its worth, arguably partially due to the unilateral force used by United States abroad into presumed sovereign nations. China appears to be seeking a renewed international acceptance of sovereignty, and being a noteworthy spokesman for such a valuable international right may increase legitimacy among many nation-states, especially among those whose sovereignty is persistently abridged.

This sovereignty claim corresponds with two of the four resistance practices discussed by Schweller and Pu [19] in their assessment of Chinese delegitimation. First, it can be said that China's sovereignty declarations are being asserted with the specific goal of putting forth a competing value directly converse to the current global hegemon: the United States. As the United States has invaded several recognized sovereign nations in recent decades, including Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, China may be using their right to sovereignty claim to demonstrate their value superiority to the United States through implicit means. Second, on each of China's four abstentions they voted separately from the United States [25]. This may indicate a cost-imposing

delegitimation strategy in which China chooses to vote against the United States in order to show other UN member states and the international community their discontent with the United States' decision making. The next section analyzing China's UNGA agenda setting leadership may help further gauge whether or not these delegitimation tactics are in use.

UNGA Agenda Setting

Agenda setting is rather important determinant of leadership, and it is especially so on the international stage. Proposing agenda items in the UNGA displays a desire to shape international discussion, and encourage awareness of global issues that affect the interests of each UN member state. In examining the Chinese delegation's speeches in the UNGA from 2006 to the present it becomes apparent that instead of being concerned with global issues, China is overwhelmingly immersed in their own regional interests and reactionary rather than proactive [21]. This finding coincides with the central discovery of Buzan's [1] research of Chinese leadership, albeit through a different measurement, and further strengthens China's apparent singular concentration on regional political interests.

Nearly every speech or statement made by the Chinese delegation over the past 6 years is a reaction to current UNGA agenda items with relatively little to no agenda propositions. Instead of being proactive and attempting to be the agenda setter, China appears to be satisfied with defending its own interests whenever a specific agenda item affects their nation directly. Particularly from 2006–2008 detailed UNGA discussion took place regarding Taiwan and the possibility of their acceptance as a new UN member state. During these discussions, the Chinese delegation seemed to be solely defensive in nature, attempting to only protect its own interests without consideration of other member states' views on the subject matter [21]. This statement by Mr. Yang Jiechi of the Chinese delegation during the 11th plenary meeting of the General Assembly displays this defensive nature in its totality,

Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory. We will not permit any challenge to the one-China principle and General Assembly resolution 2758...We hope that the countries concerned will not allow themselves to be manipulated by the Taiwan authorities and will stop making wrong moves of this kind [22].

This type of sentiment is the constant for China throughout UNGA dialogue over the 6 year span examined. Other than China's apparent focus on the one-China principle, China's lack agenda setting at the global level is also a concern for their future international legitimacy. Over the 6 year span examined, China's introduction of agenda items can be considered as non-existent relative to their international political presence. The UNGA provides an enormous opportunity for international superpowers to display their leadership capabilities, and as it pertains to China, this opportunity is for the most part going by the waste side.

A self-interested, reactionary, and inopportune China is established throughout recent UNGA debates, indicating an apathetic approach to agenda setting. To argue

otherwise is to ignore the self-protective sentiment exhibited on a regular basis by the Chinese delegation on the UNGA debate floor. Although other agenda items are regularly discussed by the Chinese delegation, they are often foreshadowed by a consistent reminder of their contempt of Taiwan's efforts for UN membership. The exclusion of Taiwan from UN membership is nearly unanimous among member states; however even so China appears to have an obsession over the issue of Taiwan and their theoretical UN membership. This detestation of Taiwan as a hypothetical UN member goes back even further than the period examined here. In 1996, China fought against the extension of the UN mission in Haiti because previously Haiti had appealed for Taiwan's acceptance into the UNGA [13]. Although more recently China's relationship with Taiwan has been improving, in order to show the world that they are a legitimate power, China must put much more emphasis on issues that have international implications, and not just Chinese implications. International legitimacy is in part attained through the presentation of a value system that is congruent with the majority of nation-states. The value system implicitly and explicitly delivered by the Chinese delegation in the UNGA is one that is only concerned with regional issues, and in some respects just Taiwan, with a relative disregard of international political interests and agenda setting in general.

It can also be argued that China's sovereignty claims from the UNSC resolutions examined in the previous section were verbalized for the specific purpose of ensuring Chinese sovereignty in the case of Taiwan. If this is the case then the Chinese delegation's right to sovereignty claims may not be related to delegitimation of the United States, as discussed in the previous section, but rather only used for self-interest. Also, through this measure there was no obvious tension between China and the United States that would indicate the utilization of cost-imposing strategies, therefore this delegitimation tactic does not appear to be currently exercised by Chinese leadership, at least explicitly.

International legitimacy does not come from single issue mindedness that China has most recently displayed in the UNGA and the UNSC over the last 6 years. Legitimacy is achieved through a more proactive and assertive approach attempting to shape what specific global issues will be addressed, and how they should be dealt with. So, according to Rapkin's legitimacy deficit framework, the sole focus on national and regional interests with an absence of a broader agenda, as China has shown so far, equates the very definition of a legitimacy deficit.

UN Peacekeeping Contributions

Testing Chinese legitimacy through peacekeeping mission support is a unique signal of international leadership that can provide a perspective that has yet to be examined by international scholars. Supporting UN peacekeeping operations indicates a concerted effort to achieve the goals that the international community wants to be accomplished. From 1990 to the present China has undergone a dramatic transformation of their peacekeeping efforts, one that leads to weighty implications regarding their international legitimacy endeavors. In 1990 China had not yet joined in supporting peacekeeping missions for all intents and purposes. Their total peacekeeping troop contributions at that time could be counted on one hand displaying their

extreme caution with placing national troops abroad. Other than the sharp spike in contributions in 1992 with over 500 troops contributed, China did not reach 100 troops contributed per year throughout the entire 1990s [23]. As the new millennium began however, a drastic change occurred as China began to increase their troop contributions exponentially. Since 2008, China has routinely contributed over 2000 troops each year to numerous peacekeeping operations, now placing China in the top fifteen yearly troop supporters [23].

During this same time period China underwent a significant increase in peacekeeping financial support as well. Coinciding almost simultaneously with the substantial increase in peacekeeping troops, China became one of the top 10 UN member state contributors to peacekeeping missions in 2003 and currently place seventh among member states in peacekeeping financial support [7]. The recent rise in troop and financial contributions to the UN for peacekeeping missions certainly signals a renewed Chinese interest in international affairs and global leadership.

Although the UNSC voting and UNGA agenda setting measures for the most part produced findings that designated China as only regionally interested, the increase in peacekeeping supports the opposite assumption. This type of transformation could not have been foreseen back in the 1990s when China seemed so resistant to the UN's international efforts. In the last two decades however, China has become the model UN member state relative to peacekeeping contributions. This alteration in Chinese policy has increased their UN power and authority within the scope of peacekeeping missions because they now have a vested interest in UN operations abroad. The recent surge in peacekeeping support shows an increase in international legitimacy for China, and therefore a larger international leadership role, specifically within the confines of the UN.

Financial Contributions to the UN Regular Budget

Each UN member state is assessed a particular portion of the budget to be paid in full in each year. This financial contribution indicates not only how much each member state can afford to pay, but also member state's overall support of the UN agenda and mission goals. The portion of the UN regular budget assessed to China has also grown quite rapidly since the 1990s, in a similar pattern to the peacekeeping contributions. In the 1990s China's assessment equaled around .7 % of the overall UN regular budget. Presently this assessment has grown to just over 3 % of the total UN budget [24]. This increase interestingly coincides almost simultaneously with the growth in peacekeeping operations support indicating that there may be a separate fiscal variable that is impacting this dramatic growth of financial aid China is providing to the UN.

China's current assessment is within the top ten highest assessed nations in the UN, showing that they are a critical contributor to UN regular budget. The states that pay higher dues include, the United States, Japan, Germany, UK, among others. However, these nations are some of the world's most influential actors, indicating that China is undeniably an important player on the international stage, at least economically. This finding signifies the important role that China plays in financing the UN, and shows that without China's contribution, the UN would be missing a significant

portion of their funding. China's choice to begin contributing to the regular budget at exponentially higher rates since the year 2001 demonstrates an important leadership quality and is representative of their ever-growing leadership role within the UN [24].

Conclusions and Discussion

Chinese legitimacy is dependent upon their international leadership, and throughout this research study China's leadership role was evaluated through the application of the legitimacy deficit framework, and analysis of their role in the UN. From the findings no substantive conclusion can be drawn accurately regarding China's legitimacy efforts. China has displayed leadership faults in the UNGA and UNSC, while also providing an overwhelming amount peacekeeping support and financial contributions to the UN regular budget. This evidence does indicate that China is continuing to grow as an emerging power and gaining international legitimacy. However, whether these efforts will alter the apparent singular national interested China displayed on the UNGA and UNSC debate floors cannot be measured from this research. Whether or not China will ever be the superordinate power in a unipolar global structure remains to be seen, and really cannot be assessed at this point in time. However, what can be said is that China is exerting at least some influential leadership within the UN through multiple facets.

After further evaluation of both China's increase in peacekeeping support and financial assessment, it became evident that a third variable is most likely they key contributor to the exponential increase in the peacekeeping and assessment variables. The radical transformation of China's peacekeeping and UN fiscal support coincides with China's ever-growing economy, and their new role as an emerging political power. Just as peacekeeping contributions and UN assessments increased exponentially from 1990 to the present, so has China's economy. In 1990 China's GDP was just over 400 billion US dollars; however, 2012 estimates suggest China's GDP may reach 11 trillion dollars. The most recent estimated increase would be the largest in China's history as their 2011 GDP was calculated to just over seven trillion dollars [2].

China is now seen around the world as a critical player in the global economic structure, and it is becoming more obvious that if China's economy were to collapse or incur a sudden collapse every nation worldwide would be affected financially. Fiscal success is a goal that every nation wishes to attain, and since it is obvious that in the past few decades China is witnessing fiscal successes, other nations will take notice and look to adopt similar economic development strategies furthering the international legitimacy of the Chinese government. This is in part occurring, but only at a regional level, and if China wants to pursue a rise to the top of the international political structure, international legitimacy is necessary for that rise.

Chinese legitimacy can be addressed in many different ways in future scholarly research. An alternate case study analysis examining China's leadership role in a foreign conflict such as the recent Libyan crisis, would provide a new perspective on Chinese international leadership. Continued research could also include a more quantitative approach analyzing precisely what variables lead to international legitimacy such as economic success or military strength. More specifically however, a

deeper assessment of China's right to sovereignty claims should indicate whether this is an assertive delegitimation tactic against the United States, or if this is simply linked to their national concerns regarding Taiwan. Overall though, this unique UN leadership perspective is only one of many potential global legitimacy studies, and this research aimed to only provide one outlook for future Chinese legitimacy.

In sum, my assessment of the data concludes that China is currently not suffering from Rapkin's legitimacy deficit and on the contrary appears to be continuing to grow as an emerging international power through UN peacekeeping and regular budget contributions. Conversely, due to the lack of strong leadership on the UNGA and UNSC, China lacks complete international legitimacy. Until China displays an internationally supported agenda, full-fledged legitimacy will be close but never fully reached. The possible legitimization of China as the international hegemonic power is an ongoing development, and future analysis of their legitimacy efforts and delegitimation tactics will provide a more complete picture of the likelihood of a global political structure change.

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