

# Is China Spoiling the Rules-Based Liberal International Order? Examining China's Rising Institutional Power in a Multiplex World Through Competing Theories

YOUCHEER KIM

*Driven by structural theories of international relations, some scholars have described China as either spoiling or shirking the rules-based liberal international order (RBLIO). The convergence of the relative US decline since the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 and China's assertive diplomacy has aggravated this anxiety. This paper examines the theoretical and empirical validity of this argument by utilizing competing theories of social constructivism and issue-path dependence. Specifically, this paper conducts a brief empirical analysis of China's stances on four core issues of global governance, including (1) voting patterns in the United Nations General Assembly, (2) trade and the World Trade Organization (WTO), (3) South China Sea disputes and the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), and (4) the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The results indicate that China has been passive toward the restructuring of legal norms, merely invoking them when a specific dispute arises. Concurrently, China occasionally pursues an alternative institutional platform if the functional concentration of a target institution is diffused and fragmented. In short, the empirical analysis demonstrates the salience of claims for China's issue-path dependence. The paper concludes with theoretical and policy implications, concluding that as China holds no predetermined, concrete stance on all components of the rules-based liberal international order, disintegrating the country from it could be a fatal mistake.*

**KEYWORDS:** Rising China; rules-based liberal international order (RBLIO); issue variance; AIIB.

\* \* \*

---

YOUCHEER KIM is a Research Fellow at the Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU). His research areas cover the voting pattern of states at the UN General Assembly and Security Council, the intersection of climate change and human rights issues, and the interdisciplinary theories of international law and international relations. He can be reached at <[youcheerkim@gmail.com](mailto:youcheerkim@gmail.com)>.



“Rising China” has nearly become a banal phrase in contemporary international relations (IR) studies. For the last two decades, thousands of scholarly works have illuminated many dimensions of China’s rising national power and its implications for the dynamics of international relations (Beckley, 2011; Christensen, 2015). Most of them, however, have disproportionately focused on material forms of power — mainly military and economic — although a few works have elaborated on more sophisticated and intangible forms such as soft power (King, 2013). Considering the multidimensional nature of power as a concept, one exemplary work succinctly summarizes the existing analyses of China’s rise, roughly classifying them into three conventional forms of power: military, money, and mind (Lampton, 2008).

One frequently underemphasized form of power in the context of a rising China, even in the convenient conceptual toolbox of power, is “institutional power” — a unique way of wielding and perpetuating power dominance. A state that is a leader in institutional creation and enjoys institutional power can influence the preferences, goals, and behaviors of other states while promoting its own interests through these institutions. Many international institutions, whether formal or informal, thus dispose state actions “in the directions that advantage some while disadvantaging others” (Barnett & Duvall, 2005). Although international institutions are the result of cooperation among states, their benefits are conferred asymmetrically, as a state with high institutional power becomes privileged while a state without it reluctantly accepts some features and products of institutions (Mastanduno, 2009). Since the US emerged as the *hegemon* by building the Bretton Woods System and embedding its liberal values into international society, it has enjoyed dominant institutional powers while paying the entailing costs — including material resources — to sustain institutions and narrow policy leverage by restraining the outright perpetration of physical force. Overall, competition among states in many cases of international institution development does not significantly differ from that which Thucydides observed in the Peloponnesian War: “the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must” (Debnar, 2017). Specifically, the case of International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been widely cited as a prime example of America’s asymmetrical institutional power in the operation of the rules-based liberal international order (RBLIO). Using the “conditionality” of relief programs, the US has allegedly pushed the expansion of market principles in troubled economies. As a dominant broker inside the IMF, the US has influenced the institution to impose lenient conditionalities on like-minded countries while micro-managing the level of conditionalities on countries with idiosyncratic preferences (Dreher & Jensen, 2007).

Considering the concurrence of China's development and concerns over the relative decline of the US material power, many IR scholars have attempted to elucidate China's stance on RBLIO. They often focus on the research question "Will China overthrow the existing order or become a part of it?" (Ikenberry, 2008, 2011b). Previous literature tends to project contrasting conclusions driven from competing theoretical traditions that can be roughly divided into either realist or liberal-constructivist camps. On the basis of the tenets of structural realism and the long-cycle theory, some IR scholars claim that China is destined to *delegitimize* the contemporary liberal international order in the short term and will attempt to replace it in the long term (Schweller & Pu, 2011). On the other hand, liberal-constructivist theorists emphasize the resilience of liberal institutions, positing the ones that are "easy to join and hard to overturn" and highlighting the long socialization process that China has embraced (Deudney & Ikenberry, 2009). As China has deeply integrated into an unshakable rules-based international order, liberals and neo-liberal institutionalists believe that its incentives lie in maintaining the stability and continuity of the liberal order rather than drastically modifying it. In a similar vein, constructivists have proposed the notion of a socialized China that fervently embraces transitional rules and norms, particularly the ones related to capitalism (Kent, 1999, 2002, 2010).

In addition, issue dependence and path dependence may also be relevant competing theories in predicting China's stance on RBLIO. This perspective posits that the characteristics of target institutions and the existence of alternative options are the main explanatory variables for predicting the behavior patterns of actors (Lipsy, 2015, 2017). If the institutional setting is foundational to the practices of international relations with strong path dependence, a rising power is not likely to modify the institutional features and mode of operation in its favor. On the other hand, if the function of an institution is more diffused, a rising power may proactively attempt to readjust institutional arrangements to reflect its enhanced share in the reality of international relations.

The question of China's stance on RBLIO and the competing explanations have become even more salient in the Xi Jinping era. Many policy makers and scholars believe that President Xi's foreign policy has been more proactive and dynamic than his predecessors. Under his leadership, China embarked on the ambitious One Belt One Road Initiative (OBORI) and launched such proactive diplomatic concepts as a "New Type of Great Power Relations" (新型大國關係; *xinxing daguo guanxi*). While some analysts emphasize these actions as part of China's clear intentions to challenge the hegemony of the US order, others take it merely as aspirational rhetoric (Ferdinand, 2016). One consensus among scholars with competing interpretations is that

China's stance on RBLIO should be assessed by looking into its actions with concrete policy examples.

Against this theoretical and empirical backdrop, this paper conducts an empirical case analysis of China's stance on four global governance issues: voting patterns in the United Nations General Assembly, World Trade Organization (WTO) governance, compliance with decisions of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) on the South China Sea, and the power dynamics of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). These issues roughly capture all critical dimensions of RBLIO that have been discussed in the existing literature regarding the ramifications of China's rise, though as an overview of the issues, it cannot be comprehensive. The result of the empirical analysis reveals that neither realist nor liberal-constructivist theories can substantially explain China's stance on RBLIO. While China has begun to actively invoke existing rules and norms to maximize its leverage in specific pending WTO cases, it is still reluctant to lead in implementing structural changes in rule-making avenues. Furthermore, China's voting patterns in the UN General Assembly and critical cases of compliance with PCA arbitration demonstrate continuity with the past rather than a departure from it.

Following the empirical analysis, the remaining part of this paper is divided into four sections. First, the paper critically reviews the extant theories of structural realism and liberal constructivism. An empirical analysis of four core issues of global governance follows, and the results are evaluated. Finally, the paper provides summary of theoretical and policy implications. The findings are consistent with claims for China's issue-path dependence, and the paper further argues that China's stance on RBLIO is currently in development and cannot be presumed.

### **Three Competing Perspectives on the Impact of a Rising China on RBLIO**

#### **Delegitimization and Spoiler Tactics: The Claims of Structural Realists**

Some scholars have logically extended neo-realist assumptions to warn of the negative implications of a rising China on RBLIO. They tend to claim that as it cherishes both the tangible and intangible benefits of institutional power, China can more assertively transform the US-led contemporary liberal international order and thereby incite its destabilization. Borrowing theoretical frameworks from strands of neo-realist theories, they argue that a rising power that envies the privileged position of the hegemon and is deeply dissatisfied with the *status quo* will typically challenge the international order constructed by the hegemon. This provocative claim of *delegitimization* has been the most recent and sophisticated one in contemporary discourse.

On the basis of the long-cycle theory and power transition theory, Schweller and Pu (2011) claim that the rising challenger *must* inevitably delegitimize the hegemon's global authority and order by dramatizing intrinsic problems in the international order and undermining or delegitimizing its legal dimension. Specifically, the *delegitimation* strategy refers to "cost-imposing strategies by engaging in diplomatic friction or foot-dragging," which assumes partial and temporary acceptance of the legitimacy of the hegemon to take advantage of opportunities and authorized channels within the order. In their analysis, China is more likely to be a spoiler or shirker rather than a strong supporter of the liberal transnational order. When it comes to specific tactics, Schweller and Pu (2011) predict that China will (1) denounce US unilateralism and promote the concept of multilateralism, (2) participate in and develop new international organizations, (3) pursue a proactive "soft-power" diplomacy in the developing world, (4) vote against the US in international institutions, and (5) set specific agendas within international and regional organizations. Most of the suggested tactics are highly relevant to the governance of international institutions, and a sophisticated empirical analysis of China's diplomatic orientation may prove or disprove these claims.

### **The Social-Constructivist Claim: China as a Follower of RBLIO**

Analogous to individuals in a domestic society who experience "socialization," states are socialized in the process of interacting with other states. Socialization may be defined as "the process whereby an individual learns to adjust to a group (or society) and behave in a manner approved by the group (or society)." According to most social scientists, socialization essentially represents "the whole process of learning throughout the life course and is a central influence on the behavior, beliefs, and actions of adults as well as of children" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2015). During socialization, individuals and states are expected to follow and internalize shared rules and norms established within a community. As members of the state community who enjoy unlimited civil rights, individuals uphold criminal statutes and basic civil law duties as the minimal expectations of the state apparatus and their fellow citizens. For individuals to remain members of their community, they experience a "legal socialization" which can be defined as "the process through which individuals acquire attitudes and beliefs about the law, legal authorities, and legal institutions" (Piquero, Fagan, Mulvey, Steinberg, & Odgers, 2005). The legal socialization process, as many empirical researches have demonstrated, can significantly affect perceptual schema, the level of an individual's integration into society, and critical features of behavior patterns such as juvenile delinquency and criminal tendencies.

According to the analytical frameworks of both international lawyers and IR scholars, legal socialization may substantially impact the behavior patterns, relations, and characteristics of interaction of sovereign states in a global society. Among many strands of IR theorists, constructivist IR theorists claim that international laws and organizations “socialize” sovereign states. International law plays a constitutive role in the international order by “supporting [the] structure of expectations without which the intercourse of states would surely suffer an early collapse. . . and by facilitating regular, continuous, and generally orderly international relationships” (Wilson, 2009). Due to the constitutive effects of multilateral treaties and international organizations, many constructivist IR scholars expect the behavioral changes of state actors to be an outcome of socialization. For instance, members of the UN are expected not to pose a military threat to other countries, as this is prohibited by Article 2(4) of the Charter. In a similar way, all members of the WTO are forbidden from providing privileged market access to a select few countries, as this violates the Most-Favored-Nations principle. Likewise, membership in multilateral treaties and international organizations is expected to bring about certain behavioral changes in state actors, even if it is sometimes merely aspirational.

The existing literature illustrates mainly three roots of specific causal mechanisms for the effects of socialization. One is illustrated by the existence of an epistemic community, or “a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area.” Such a community can promote socialization and behavioral convergence between states (Haas, 1992). International lawyers, judges, entrepreneurs, policy makers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are the typical actors behind the socialization process. As many dimensions of state functions and international relations are *legalized*, the interpretive power of the epistemic community and intricate networks among actors become substantially aggrandized. In WTO governance, members of the legal epistemic community tend to promote the rules of the organization in many policy decisions and as a focal point in negotiations with other countries.

Another important mechanism that facilitates socialization is “acculturation,” which refers to “the general process of adopting the beliefs and behavioral patterns of the surrounding culture” (Goodman & Jinks, 2013). The acculturation process is typically initiated and facilitated through the “social-psychological costs of non-conformity” or “group pressure” of the actors. In many critical domestic policy areas that include but are not limited to the environment, education, food safety, human rights, and banking regulations, states attempt to conform to the institutions and policies of other countries as a result of domestic and international pressures. Thus, the

organizational structure of administrative apparatuses and policies appears similar across different countries. This emulating process is also labeled as “institutional isomorphism.”

The concept of “legal embeddedness” explains a more functional socialization mechanism charted by the international order. As long as they are signed by heads of state and ratified by legislative bodies, all treaties and customary international law constitute a part of the supreme law of the land. Because of the incorporation process, bodies of international law are not merely “soft” law existing outside the core decision-making processes, but are rather sources of law that are discussed, deliberated, and cited in courtrooms and other venues of important decision-making. Components of the international legal order are not “just debated and interpreted, but ultimately internalized by domestic legal systems” (Koh, 1996). Some quantitative testing also demonstrates the salience of crucial elements of the international order such as the socialization effects of international organizations (Bearce & Bondanella, 2007).

China’s stance on the international legal order is framed by some IR scholars as a good illustration of how international legal norms can socialize an originally pariah state. To this group of scholars, China was actually the least likely case of socialization because of a self-oriented historical legacy in which it has posited itself as the center of world and others as barbarians, lacked a tradition of the rule of law, and demonstrated its capability to ignore international rules (Goodman & Jinks, 2013; Kent, 2002, 2010). However, they view that as it was invited and integrated into organizations such as the UN, IMF, World Bank, and WTO, China came to internalize the liberal international order. As these rules are deeply embedded in the domestic governance structure of China, these scholars believe that China is playing a “game” under rules set by the global community as it pursues similar goals such as modernization and economic growth (Steinfeld, 2012).

### **The Issue Dependence of China’s Choice for Contestation and the Path Dependence in RBLIO**

Contrary to the consistent behavior patterns projected by either structural realism or social constructivism, some IR scholars have expounded on the inconsistent and fragmented behavior of state actors in the institutional arrangements in RBLIO. This perspective supposes that a state’s institutional features and propensity for competition are the driving forces for its particular stance. In other words, “the institutional setting” is a key variable for this theoretical perspective if “a change in the distribution of capabilities” or “socialization effects” are game changers for realist institutionalism

and constructivism, respectively. As the institutional setting differs from one issue to another, there can hardly be a universal, dominant, and consistent set of policy choices for rising states toward international institutions. Consistent with rational-choice theory, all state actors pursue a utility-maximizing strategy within a unique institutional setting.

The critical point of this perspective is that such institutional settings are heterogeneous, and so are the stances of state actors toward them. Analogous to various market types, political institutions in different areas unconsciously compete with alternative platforms for salience and longevity. As the propensity for competition among institutions differs from one policy area to another, a state actor adopts a contrasting policy stance between unwavering support and none at all. As an illustration, many state actors are less likely to build an alternative institution to the UN, as the function of comprehensive legitimization is highly concentrated within it and there is no viable competitive institutional platform. Under this specific institutional setting, an attempt to overthrow the existing institution or spoil it will be counter-effective at best. Therefore, even rising states may wish to stay in existing institutions and even actively utilize them if such institutions possess a high level of functional concentration. Furthermore, invoking rules enshrined in such organizations can enhance the negotiating leverage of participating countries. On the other hand, states might pursue participation in an alternative institution if the propensity for competition is fierce and the practical demand for alternative institutional platforms is high (Lipsky, 2015, 2017).

In the context of China's rising institutional power, the extended explanation of issue dependence tends to point to an idiosyncratic stance on the main dimensions of RBLIO. In such policy areas where the existing components of RBLIO are less entrenched, China is more likely to strategically frame and invoke the existing institutions rather than drastically modifying them or building alternative ones. Unlike the structural realist's *delegitimization* argument, strategic framing is not a unique strategy that pertains only to a powerful and rising power such as China. Even Libya under the Gaddafi regime actively utilized the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to resist some consecutive UN Security Council resolutions that demanded the extradition of terrorists who were allegedly involved in the bombing of civil aircraft in the Lockerbie case. During the ICJ litigation case, the Gaddafi regime pinpointed the inconsistencies of the Council resolutions within the Montreal Convention, which stipulates that a state must "prosecute or extradite" a suspect. As these inconsistencies were conspicuous to many prominent international lawyers and the diplomatic community, the US and UK faced a legitimacy crisis and substantially lost their bargaining power in negotiations with the Gaddafi regime (Hurd, 2005). Even if this case demonstrates the



Gaddafi regime's shrewd understanding and adoption of the procedural aspects of public international law, few might argue that adjudication *per se* was evidence of Gaddafi regime's socialization or internationalization of substantive laws in the international community.

In the realm of WTO governance, many developing countries upon reaching a certain threshold of legal capacity have actively begun to legally challenge highly industrialized Western countries to protect their interests. This abrupt policy transition to active litigation has been labeled as "aggressive legalism," which can be defined as "a conscious strategy of utilizing a substantive set of international legal rules and making them to serve as both 'shield' and 'sword' in trade disputes among sovereign states" (Pekkanen, 2001). The "shield" is notable when international legal rules provide justification for a sovereign country's domestic measures, whereas the "sword" is conspicuous when a sovereign country challenges another's policies, either in negotiations or through the WTO litigation process.

In East Asia, Japan was the first to adopt an aggressive legal strategy and South Korea followed suit. Though suffering from unilateral American retaliatory trade policies such as the notorious "Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974," the two countries were reluctant to take legal action because of a trade surplus and their reliance on the US for security. A series of litigation cases by South Korea and Japan in the last decade has demonstrated that the WTO system has become significantly legalized and a confrontation in the Dispute-Settlement Body (DSB) does not denigrate cooperation in other areas. Considering the limited capabilities of these countries and their security dependence on the US, their actions can hardly be understood as delegitimizing either US policies or the liberal international order. Irrespective of a systemic transition or a political necessity of balancing against the US, these countries have actively sued the country and won many cases. If so, similar behavior patterns in many *judicialized* international organizations or critical policy-making areas where China has demanded legal framing should not be hastily characterized as compelling evidence in support of the delegitimization argument. At the same time, merely framing and citing legal norms to justify its policy stances can hardly be compelling evidence of socialization. Without a deep level of internalization shown in the form of legal *embeddedness*, one can hardly expect the form of socialization that entails a transformation of identity and a change in behavior.

In the context of the four global governance issues illustrated below, China has begun to occasionally pursue alternative institutional arrangements when faced with both a high propensity for institutional competition and demand from other states. In the context of global rule-making and norm-building, China has been reluctant to

embrace a leading role but has made the exception of pushing the growth of AIIB as a hedging strategy against risks and uncertainties in the existing global and regional platforms. Otherwise, China is likely to invoke the existing principles in RBLIO. Both policy stances, however, are not necessarily unique to China and have limited geopolitical implications in issue- and path-dependence theory.

## **From the Unfalsifiable Claim of China as a Spoiler to the Testing of Competing Theories**

### **A Summary of Three Theory-Driven Arguments and Issues of Competing Perspectives**

The main features of competing theories on China's institutional power are summarized in Table 1. Under structural/realist institutionalism, China's spoiling strategy is driven by its deep grudges. Realist theory assumes the interaction between the structural *stimuli* and the profit-seeking responses of the actors by changes in the rules of the "game"; thus, the spoiling tactics should be consistently confirmed across a variety of issue areas. Similarly, liberal/constructivist theories are also blind to the issue dynamic and pinpoint the distribution of collective identity as a key variable that promotes the convergence of China's behavioral patterns with major Western countries. The issue- and path-dependence perspective alone predicts the fragmented features of China's stance toward RBLIO by focusing on the relative autonomous institutions and path dependence.

Both fundamentally deductive and system-oriented, the provocative delegitimization argument invites some conceptual confusion and misguided convictions about China's stance toward the liberal international order. Though parsimonious in nature, the argument's most conspicuous theoretical problem is it can hardly be falsifiable. For this claim to be accepted, the definition of core concepts and the

Table 1.  
*Summary of Competing Theories on China's Institutional Power*

Theories Dimensions	Realist (Structural) Institutionalism	Social Constructivism	Issue/Path Dependence
Optimizing Tactics of States	Establishing game rules in its own terms	Learning/ Acculturalization	Strategic framing
Prediction of China's RBLIO	Delegitimization/ Spoiler	Bandwagoning/Convergence of behavior patterns	Issue variance

relationship among operationalized concepts must be expounded. At the same time, murky and abstract concepts in the theory's analytical framework make it difficult to verify. The core explanatory variable is the "change of polarity" and the dependent variable described as the "specific dimension of order." The dependent variable must be further developed in order to constitute a theoretical claim.

Aside from the positivist's yardstick of "falsifiability," defining *Pax Americana* as the concept of order or even a dominant form of it is controversial at best. Even though the US wields dominant institutional power and has contributed to the development of RBLIO, the RBLIO and American dominance are not one and the same. Order, in Hedley Bull's classical definition, can be defined as "a pattern of activity that advances a goal." Order is geared toward providing basic stability in an anarchical international society, and the main goals in the international order are defined as: (i) goals of all social life (security, agreement, and property), (ii) preservation of the state system of states, (iii) maintaining the independence of separate units, and (iv) preserving peace (Bull, Hurrell, & Hoffman, 2012). Therefore, one of the fundamental issues in RBLIO is how to tame a hegemon like the US, making the country a supporter rather than a destroyer of it. From the perspective of US leadership, the post-World War II settlement was completed by the constitutional logic of self-restraint (Ikenberry, 2000, 2011a).

Although hegemonic powers play a critical role in the institutional-building process and constrain themselves to established rules in order to perpetuate their power by enhancing their legitimacy, enshrined rules frequently conflict with the interests of the hegemon. In other words, even hegemonic power does not monopolize the rules, decision-making procedures, and implementation of RBLIO. During the US invasion of Iraq, the fierce criticism from other countries and its allies as well as other diplomatic hassles rested fundamentally upon the UN Charter. The US has also lost several cases in the WTO according to its statutes, statutes which had been built through its leadership. In this process, any country including China or other rising powers could take actions similar to one of the five tactics illustrated by *delegitimization* theory with legitimate concerns, following and utilizing the game rules stipulated in the main components of the international legal order. In this regard, even actions taken by rising powers under the current legal order can be labeled empirical evidence of *delegitimization*.

Furthermore, as *delegitimization* theory does not project either competing theories or substantial pieces of empirical evidence, the argument is simply not compelling. Schweller & Pu (2011) take a deterministic view by claiming, "Prior to military confrontation or even the threat of such conflict, we argue that the rising

challenger must delegitimize the hegemon's global authority and order." Though the article can be taken as a purely theoretical paper with pioneering ideas, at least identifying the main competing theories is necessary to compel its theoretical salience. To ultimately prove or disprove its validity, the theory should be tested alongside other competing ones. Throughout the history of IR, many strands of IR theories have proposed contrasting epistemological frameworks and explanations for international institutions. In the heyday of the so-called "neo-neo debate," groups of IR scholars debated over the core issue of the nature and role of international institutions. Focusing on the importance of how the "international system" defined the way in which units are allocated, neo-realist IR scholars expressed an almost deterministic view of the impact of anarchical international systems on security competition among states.

To neo-realist theorists, tangible material sources of national power and military capabilities in particular were critical components that determined the features of international system (Waltz, 2010). As a logical consequence, neo-realists either neglected the salience of international institutions or treated them as mere *epiphenomena* of great power politics at the early era of theoretical founding. From the perspective of traditional realist IR scholars, bodies of international law were too decentralized, their interpretations too arbitrary, and the enforcement mechanisms too weak (Morgenthau, Thompson, & Clinton, 2005). However, some fundamental changes in international relations were notably clear even to realist theorists, making the reformulation of their views on the rules of international relations nearly inevitable. Many international organizations have been highly legalized and exhibit high levels of obligation, precision, and delegation. In fact, "legalization" has become a buzzword describing the characteristics of international relations in the post-Cold War era. While international law had once been labeled as the *epiphenomenon* of great powers and neglected by IR scholars, it is now regulating many issues in global governance that include security, trade, the environment, human rights, and transnational crime (Goldstein, Kahler, Keohane, & Slaughter, 2001).

In conjunction with such dramatic changes, contemporary realists have attempted to answer the rationale and results of legalization with an analytical focus on realist variables — the distribution of capabilities, power transition, and the security dilemma — rather than simply turning a blind eye toward legalization. To them, a great power by manipulating international institutions "guides, steers, and constrains the actions (or non-actions) and conditions of existence of others" (Barnett & Duvall, 2005). They have also empirically demonstrated that the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) system has conferred more benefits in the form of economic growth to industrialized Western countries than to underdeveloped or developing countries (Gowa & Kim, 2005). Likewise, international institutions are a locus of power politics,

and great powers enjoy asymmetrical relative gains from their dominance in spaces of institutional power. Likewise, the structural realist perspective on institutionalism is one of its competing theories that provides different explanations and insights on China's rise and its impact on RBLIO.

Though many other IR theories have provided useful insight for the development, operation, and reconstruction of the international order and institutions in general, not all can posit a tailored and compelling explanation of China's rise and its impact on RBLIO. As the broad IR "paradigm" is oriented toward explaining and predicting all dimensions of state behavior in a comprehensive and generalizable manner, it frequently fails to consider the context of the contested order brought about by China's rise. In the context of institution-building, for instance, the rational choice model and neo-liberal institutionalism emphasize that utility-maximizing behavior is omnipresent in every rational actor. If China and other stakeholders find that the construction and operation of international institutions serves their immediate interests by casting a long shadow over the future, the rational choice model or neo-liberal institutionalism may predict the emergence of cooperative institution-building. While such actor-driven micro-theories may provide general guidance with regard to China's stances on specific RBLIO dimensions, deriving a consistent explanation and prediction is practically impossible since the incentive structure of a certain institutional setting is usually not measurable or unchanging.

### **The Main Components of RBLIO and Issue Selection**

Four major components of RBLIO were selected to empirically test competing theories of China's behavioral patterns: voting patterns in the UN General Assembly, the WTO, PCA arbitration compliance, and the AIIB. Each target institution represents different institutional collective decision-making, trade issues, territorial settlement, and finance sectors. Each of these issue areas has also been regarded as the foundation of contentions between major Western powers and China (Johnston, 2013). This comparative case study serves the analytical goal of evaluating the variance in behavior patterns across different issue areas.

### **Decoding China's Stance on Four Core Issues of RBLIO**

#### **Voting Patterns in the UN General Assembly: The Continuity and Path Dependence of Coalition Patterns**

To visualize a general trend for China's stance toward UN governance, it can be useful to examine the country's voting patterns in the General Assembly. The "ideal point"

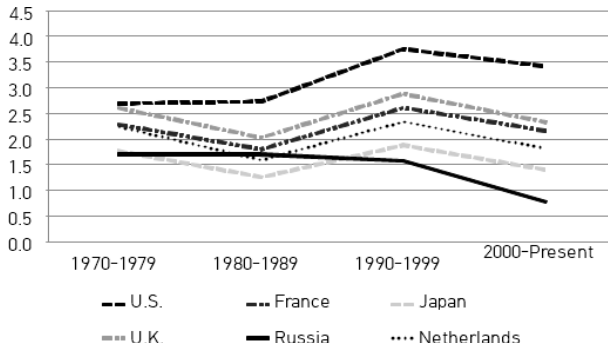


Figure 1. Convergence and divergence of China's ideal point with other main stakeholders in the international legal order.

index provides an objective piece of evidence for this evaluation. This dataset was created by roll-call votes in the UN and coded with the  $S$ -indicator, calculated as  $1 - 2 \cdot (d)/d_{\max}$  in which  $d$  indicates the sum of metric distances between votes by dyad members in a given year, with  $d_{\max}$  being the largest possible metric distance for those votes (Bailey, Strezhnev, & Voeten, 2015). Many previous studies have utilized the dataset to measure shared interests or the convergence of state identities. Even if a substantial gap between concept and measurement still exists as in many other forms of social science research, this is nonetheless a useful way to examine the impact of socialization on Chinese foreign policy-making.

In the ideal point distance index, 0 indicates a perfect match in UN General Assembly voting, and the sum of raw scores of the two states in a dyad indicates the distance of accumulated voting patterns between the two countries. Figure 1 displays trends in the *absidealdiff* index between China and other main stakeholders in RBLIO from the 1970s to the present, thereby showing the convergence or divergence of trends in China's voting patterns in the UN General Assembly.

Unlike the structural institutionalist's characterization of China as a spoiler, its voting patterns have in fact begun to gradually converge with that of leading RBLIO countries since its economic prowess improved substantially around the early 2000s. When the General Assembly was highly invested in human rights issues following the *Tiananmen Square* incident and the increase in UN agendas that involved international intervention, China's traditional doctrine of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other states incited a perception and action gap among other stakeholder countries. After the early 2000s, however, China was able to cast more affirmative votes when more reduction agendas in the General Assembly began to address more developmental, environmental, and disaster reduction agendas.

Concurrently, trends in China's voting patterns do not fit into the claims of liberal constructivists. Even though China's voting patterns tend to incrementally converge with other countries, the speed and magnitude of this convergence have been most intense with Russia. In line with its geopolitical contention with the Soviet Union, China had frequently found itself at odds with its comrade in UN governance and the General Assembly during the Cold War era. As a result, common votes between the two communist countries remained below those with Japan and the Netherlands until the late 1990s. As mainstream liberal-constructive researchers have expected China's policies to converge with Western democratic countries as a result of its integration into global market capitalism, the incorporation of treaties, and dense networks of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), the revival of its authoritarian ties in voting remains an enigma (Kent, 2002; Steinfeld, 2012).

The perspective of issue variance and path dependence, as partially illustrated above, explains China's voting patterns somewhat more effectively. China from its accession has emphasized neutrality, non-intervention in domestic affairs, and affinity with developing countries. Regarding the latter, the first Chinese delegate to the UN Chiao Kuan-hua proudly declared, "Like the overwhelming majority of the Asian, African, and Latin American countries, China belongs to the Third World" (Chai, 1979). Though some recent empirical studies claim that increasing trade between China and African–Latin American states has promoted a convergence of voting patterns, the affinity itself can hardly be considered new (Flores-Macías & Kreps, 2013). While recent empirical studies have tested the manipulative convergence by China based on recent data gathered in a limited timeframe, the longer trend shown in Figure 1 and early studies tends to demonstrate the salience of path dependence.

### **Global Trade and the WTO: Lingering Strategic Framing**

The WTO has long been touted as a crown jewel of international organizations in terms of its high degree of legalization, which can be measured by three dimensions of obligation, precision, and delegation (Goldstein et al., 2001). The court-like characteristics of the DSB, consisting of the Panel and Appellate Body (AB) in particular, obligate sovereign states to abide by the WTO's specific interpretation of the rules. These highly legalized institutional characteristics and its relatively rigorous monitoring system establish the WTO as an ideal locus from which researchers can evaluate and judge a certain country's diplomatic orientation toward RBLIO.

As the WTO adjudication process has been initiated with a narrowly defined legal question and delivered by the autonomous Panel and AB, power asymmetry

is less substantial in the case adjudication process than in bilateral negotiations. Even a physically weaker party, if it provides compelling legal arguments, can maintain a more effective bargaining position than a stronger opponent (Davis & Bermeo, 2009). At least in theory, the WTO should be an attractive forum for developing countries.

Even if developing countries can expect a comparatively fair adjudication process, reaching such a stage is not always easy. Many empirical studies indicate that there are several barriers to developing countries gaining full access to the WTO. Many developing countries do not usually have the financial capacity to afford the costly adjudications and government officials who possess a shrewd understanding of WTO rules that are necessary to manage the whole process. If developing countries manage to overcome such barriers, however, they also tend to be repeat players in the WTO adjudication process, as are wealthy industrialized countries (Davis & Bermeo, 2009).

When it comes to trends in China's litigation cases, empirical evidence indicates that China has begun to adopt an "aggressive or assertive legalism." As of February 2, 2015, China has been engaged in 176 WTO cases — 12 cases as a complainant, 32 cases as a respondent, and 132 cases as a third party. These recent trends are highly noteworthy to the extent that only the US outnumbers China in the number of WTO adjudications in the period of 2007–2010 (Li, 2012). Typical targets of China's aggressive litigation cases are illustrated in Figure 2. They include safeguard measures, tariff measures, anti-dumping (AD), and subsidized countervailing duties (CVDs), which usually negatively affect Chinese exports. Considering that China's market shares are increasing in major economic powerhouses, the re-emergence of protectionism in those countries, and the longstanding discriminatory measures against Chinese products based on a non-market economy status, China's assertiveness in the WTO is not astonishing. The most startling aspect of the Chinese Government's aggressive legalism, however, is its glaring success. Out of eight delivered cases, the

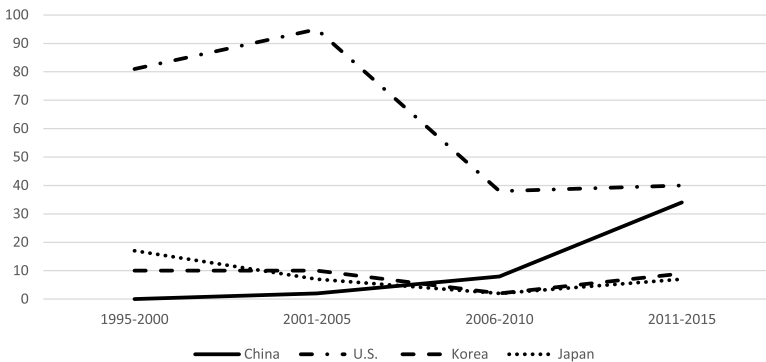


Figure 2. Dispute settlements: China and other WTO countries.



Chinese Government clearly won in six, obtained mixed results in the DS 379 case, and only failed in the DS 399 case.

Does China's assertive legalism demonstrate characteristics of either delegitimization or socialization? In other words, do China's attempts to reconstruct or destabilize WTO rules or its 15 years of experience in the WTO reflect the internalization of its norms? One simple answer to this question is that neither explanation fully captures China's stance toward WTO governance. Despite certain trends, China's assertive litigations fit more aptly into a strategic framing claim than either claims of *delegitimization* or socialization. China's relative apathy to building a coalition at the Ministerial Conference, which should be a locus of *delegitimization* and superficial *embeddedness*, rebuts both *delegitimization* and socialization claims.

First, other rising powers such as India and Brazil are more assertive than China in the WTO Ministerial Conference, and there is no convincing evidence of coalition formation among them. China tends to bandwagon with other rising powers rather than actively lead them. Its longstanding aloofness to the reform agenda in the Ministerial Conference has largely stemmed from an idiosyncratic trade structure that is not shared by other developing countries. China's exports and economic development have not depended upon agriculture, which has been a main reform agenda among other developing countries. China's apathy has led to other major powers pressuring it to take a more active role. EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson commented:

"I am aware that many in China feel that the country paid a high price in 2001 to get into the WTO...So although I recognize the particular status of China as a "recently acceded" WTO member, we are looking to you to contribute again. . . I am looking to China, as the greatest, most powerful and most rapidly advancing developing economy, to show leadership in the run up to our Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December this year (2005). . . you can contribute more than may at first sight appear necessary or reasonable. I should add that this is often the price for leadership." (Narlikar & Vickers, 2009, p. 125)

At the same time, a brief historical analysis of China's accession to the WTO can reveal the country's instrumental stance toward it, a stance which is in conflict with socialization claims. Previous studies have described this period as the one in which Jiang Zemin sought to stimulate internal growth and domestic reforms to suppress bureaucratic groups, farmers, and other reluctant domestic actors who were opposed to further economic liberalization (Feng, 2006). Jiang's bold liberalization drive stemmed from the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) urgent desire to posit economic development and good governance as new sources of legitimacy to replace the fading loyalty to Maoism (Baden, 2011). In this political context, the Chinese Government had undertaken "WTO-plus obligations," demanding higher responsibilities in market economy conditions, foreign investment, and domestic governance. At the same time,

China accepted “WTO-minus provisions,” permitting an importing member to lower WTO standards in applying trade remedies against Chinese products (Qin, 2007).

Likewise, while the Chinese Government has not necessarily taken a notably active spoiler role in the WTO, it has nevertheless avoided deep internalization. Rather, the country has tended to utilize highly legalized dispute settlements when they serve its narrowly defined mercantile interests. Thus, highly legalized and deeply entrenched dispute-settlement mechanisms of the WTO have affected China’s behavior substantially than is typical when rising states move to challenge the existing RBLIO.

### **The Settlement of Territorial Disputes and Compliance with the Decision of the PCA: The Tragedy of Geopolitics and the Limitations of RBLIO**

Concerning its diplomatic orientation toward disputed territories and more broadly toward the international order, some US-based think tanks, area specialists, and opinion leaders are anxious about China’s “new assertiveness” on these issues. This group of experts shares a realist perspective, claiming that both the relative decline of US power in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis and China’s emerging nationalism are crucial factors that have given rise to its new assertiveness (Yahuda, 2013). However, China has a greater likelihood than other states of becoming involved in territorial disputes, as it shares 22,000 km of borderlines and vast maritime areas with 14 neighboring countries. Fundamentally, China’s staunch stance on its territorial integrity is not at all new. China has had 23 territorial disputes, and only six of these have developed into military disputes and did not reoccur after the 1990s. Furthermore, China has historically used military force in cases when its relative power and bargaining leverage have declined, and not at times when it enjoys improved capabilities and enhanced diplomatic leverage (Fravel, 2011).

Among the territorial and maritime disputes between China and neighboring countries, the Spratly Islands appear to be the most contentious area that has been brought to the PCA. In the disputed South China Sea, Vietnam effectively controls the most islets at 28 or 29, China controls 7–8, Taiwan controls 1–2, the Philippines controls 7–9, Malaysia controls 3–5, and Brunei controls 1 or 2 (Koo, 2016). China’s legal claim over Spratly Islands in the South China Sea is based on four legal grounds: (1) Discovery, (2) Occupation, (3) Treaty, and (4) Estoppel. China claims that its historical title to the Spratly Islands dates back to 111 BCE when it was discovered by the Han Dynasty and used as a landmark for a voyage. China also claims that in later dynasties the Islands were used to harvest rare medical herbs and were inhabited by Chinese doctors. At the close of World War II, the Japanese Government surrendered all territories acquired through its military expansion to the Republic of China (ROC)

in the 1951 Treaty of San Francisco. China claims that when the People's Republic of China (PRC) replaced the ROC as the sole representative of China, the PRC gained full sovereignty over the Islands (Beller, 1994). To further consolidate its *de facto* control over some areas, China has also constructed artificial islands that have aggravated contentions with neighboring countries.

One conspicuous dynamic in the Spratly Islands is that all disputants have been quite assertive. China's reclamation activity in the disputed area garnered attention from both neighboring countries and the US as an offshore balancer. However, the Philippines and Vietnam also engaged in similar operations before China did. Vietnam and the Philippines also developed oil rigs through joint ventures with foreign companies, despite China's protestations. Furthermore, there is no clause in the UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) which prohibits the construction of artificial islands. As such, sovereign countries are presumed to have the right to engage in operations that are not explicitly prohibited by either treaty or customary international law (Mrosovsky, 2008). The Philippines initiated arbitration proceedings on January 22, 2013, and the PCA finally delivered its verdict on July 12, 2016. Despite China's consistent objection to the Court's jurisdiction and non-presence, the PCA acknowledged the merits of almost all issues presented by the Philippines and accepted its claims (McDorman, 2016). In its position paper submitted to the court, the Chinese Government emphasized the limited scope of its agreement on the compulsory dispute-settlement procedures as follows:

"As a State Party to the Convention, China has accepted the provisions of Part 2 of Part XV on compulsory dispute settlement procedures. But that acceptance does not mean that those procedures apply to disputes of territorial sovereignty, or disputes which China has agreed with other States Parties to settle by means of their own choice, or disputes already excluded by Article 297 and China's 2006 declaration filed under Article 298. With regards to the Philippines' claims for arbitration, China has never accepted any of the compulsory procedures of section 2 of Part XV." (Whomersley, 2016)

In its statement, the PCA denied the alleged implications of China's territorial claims and its historic rights within the nine-dash line. Simply, the Court confirmed that China's denying Philippines' access to the disputed area by way of its alleged historical title is not consistent with UNCLOS. Furthermore, the Court also found that its relentless construction of artificial islands and the attendant negative environmental impact also violated the spirit and substance of UNCLOS. Though the Chinese Government vehemently rebutted PCA's verdict, recent testimonies from Filipino fishermen reveal that they have recovered access to the disputed fishing zone (Ku & Mirasola, 2016). Although some evidence exists to the contrary, Chinese authorities have been generally prudent in the way they have directly challenged the PCA's decision.

China's stance on territorial arrangements in the South China Sea tends to exhibit continuity and prudence rather than provocation and assertiveness. Concurrently, the constructivist's socialization claim is not supported by China's reluctance to accept the decisions of the PCA. Throughout the legal process, China has consistently objected to the jurisdiction and merits of decisions against its pivotal interests. Most other great powers have a long record of non-compliance with the decisions of international courts: the US in the Nicaragua case, France in the Nuclear Test case, and Russia in the Georgia case. The claim that China's non-compliance is critical evidence of its desire to overthrow or undermine the RBLIO is therefore invalid. Territorial disputes and legal settlements are simply the weakest links in RBLIO. The existence of these under-institutionalized characteristics and the lack of a precedent of compliance are what have led China to boldly oppose the decisions of the PCA. In the end, this weak "institutional setting" has made China's behavior consistent with the issue/path-dependence claim.

### **Developmental Finance and the AIIB: Building an Alternative Institutional Platform from Demands and Benefits**

Some IR scholars have pinpointed AIIB as a policy tool for China's financial dominance that will ultimately chip away the US dominance in the financial sector. Similar to realist institutionalism, a strand of IR scholars has claimed that China established the AIIB to reframe the global financial order in its favor. Disgruntled with Japan's dominance in the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the slow institutional reform of the World Bank and IMF, China's "hegemonic identity" in East Asia has inspired it to build an alternative institutional platform (Albert, 2015; Hong, 2018). The concurrence of China's ambitious "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) with plans to establish the AIIB has deepened these suspicions. China's enshrined institutional power in the AIIB is demonstrated by the location of its headquarters in Beijing, its management by Chinese executives, and China's ownership of 27% of its shares. A cursory look at the motivations and functions of the institution serves to bolster the salience of the structural institutionalist claim.

Other evidence and analytic perspectives, however, reveal that the AIIB has a limited geopolitical and diplomatic reach. First, its institutional structure and management mimics the World Bank and other regional banks. Even the conditionality of loans that was a main source of US concern has adopted a similar safeguard system in three core areas: (1) environmental safeguards, (2) involuntary resettlement

safeguards, and (3) indigenous peoples' safeguards (Park, 2017). So long as these principles are observed, the AIIB is not likely to function as China's personal bank that will be selectively opened for compliant developing countries. Second, the AIIB is not likely to replace existing institutions due to its limited capital subscription. The AIIB's capital subscriptions of US\$100 billion fell short of World Bank and ADB levels which remain at US\$263 billion and US\$147 billion, respectively. Finally, the list of AIIB members includes countries with a high level of security concerns — India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam — making the notion that the AIIB is a tool for delegitimizing US dominance dubious at best.

Fundamentally, the planning and operation of the BRI has been motivated by the concurrence of an infrastructure gap indicated by the ADB and a long-term “going out” (走出去; *zouchuqu*) policy. In other words, the BRI can be interpreted as the outcome of China's continuous economic policies rather than a newly crafted geopolitical strategy in the Xi Jinping era. A 2009 ADB report indicated that the Asian region requires approximately US\$750 billion in annual financing for the development of its infrastructure (ADB, 2009). This was also the exact point when China's overseas direct investment (ODI) began to burgeon. As Table 2 illustrates, China's ODI reached US\$27 billion in 2002 and skyrocketed more than 20-fold in 2009, reaching US\$565 billion. It reached US\$1.961 trillion in 2016, followed only by the US. Although this

Table 2.  
*China's Overseas Direct Investments 2002–2016*

Year	Amount (Billion USD)	World ranking	Increase (%)
2002	27	26	—
2003	28.5	21	5.6
2004	55	20	93
2005	122.6	17	122.9
2006	211.6	13	43.8
2007	265.1	17	25.3
2008	559.1	12	110.3
2009	565.3	5	1.1
2010	688.1	5	21.7
2011	746.5	6	8.5
2012	878	3	17.6
2013	1,078.40	3	22.8
2014	1,231.20	3	14.2
2015	1,456.70	2	18.3
2016	1,961.50	2	34.7

skyrocketing ODI level is an internationally observed policy outcome, its origin dates back to policies in the late 1990s. Since 1997, Chinese authorities have encouraged state-owned enterprises to proactively engage in overseas investment to enhance their global competitiveness and acquire advanced technologies. While state-sponsored overseas investment into infrastructure was usually done bilaterally in this early period, the initiative to construct the AIIB opened a new multilateral platform (Yeo, 2018).

As the AIIB will soon reach the fifth anniversary of its foundation, a brief analysis of its portfolio may also reveal the bank's role in China's broader geopolitical strategy. The result reveals that the connection between the two is rather weak. Most AIIB-funded projects to date are partnerships with other MDBs (Multilateral Developmental Banks), and the majority of them are not BRI-related. A total of 38 projects were approved as of May 6, 2019, and many of them in target countries such as India, Turkey, and Egypt that were either non-interested or skeptical. In terms of value and share, BRI-related projects have taken only US\$1.03 billion, a mere 29.7% of the total (Hameiri & Jones, 2018). Likewise, there is much evidence to indicate that the AIIB is not a means for China's spoiling tactics and realist institutionalism.

## Summary and Conclusion

Contemporary studies on the nexus between China's rise and its impact on RBLIO demonstrate that its changing structure in the form of power distribution is a critical explanatory variable to understand the country's stance toward the future of the international order. While these arguments are based on structural IR theories, they exhibit weak empirical validity and are not consistent with the analysis of the four core global governance issues presented in this paper. Instead, China's stance on the primary dimensions of global governance has exhibited either continuity or incremental changes in procedural aspects within institutions. Such issues include but are not limited to UN General Assembly voting patterns, WTO governance, territorial arrangements and PCA agreements, and the establishment and management of the AIIB.

The results of the analysis (Table 3) indicate the salience of the issue-variance argument and path dependence in RBLIO. As China's voting patterns in the General Assembly illustrate, it does not attempt to either overthrow or spoil existing institutions when its legitimacy is firmly established and internalized in the practices of main stakeholder countries. In the institutional context of the WTO, China proactively

Table 3.

*Summary of the Major Findings from the Comparative Case Analysis*

Findings cases	Characteristic of institutions	The legitimacy of institutions	China's behavior patterns
Voting Patterns in the UN General Assembly	Diffused	High	Passive
Global Trade and the WTO	Legalized/Centralized	Divided/Contested	Instrumental/Prudent in the Institutional Reform
Territorial Disputes and the PCA	Diffused/Decentralized	Divided/Contested	Neglect/Confrontation
Development Finance and the AIIB	Diffused/Decentralized	Divided/Contested	Building an Alternative Platform

opposes other WTO members by invoking WTO rules and procedures. While such new practices of China might be best framed as “assertive legalism,” they remain far from being spoiling tactics. At first glance, China’s behavior in the settlement of disputes and its opposition to PCA arbitration appear to substantiate the spoiling tactic claim, but this assumption neglects the fact that all other P-5 members have a long record of opposing the decisions of authoritative international courts. Thus, China’s stance on PCA arbitration can hardly be empirical evidence for “spoiling tactics.” In the realm of development finance and the AIIB, China’s increasing ODI and the construction of the AIIB as an alternative institutional platform may be the partial replacement of the dominant role of the World Bank or ADB. However, the nature of AIIB’s operations and China’s policy motivations are still far from spoiling tactics.

As the comparative case analysis in this paper has illuminated, China’s behavior patterns toward the main components of RBLIO are highly issue-driven and path-dependent. As the RBLIO is “locked-in” in the practices and customs of international relations, it is not practical or feasible for a rising power to drastically modify or challenge it. Furthermore, the main components of RBLIO — UN governance, trade, the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes, and finance — have specific issue dynamics. China has attempted to invoke and promote rules when they serve its interests (Acharya, 2017). In some cases, China’s practice of strategic framing has struck an effective balance with main stakeholder states.

Though more recent research has tended to focus on Premier Xi’s proactive policy doctrines and statements, the rhetoric alone does not demonstrate the realist perspective. While China constructed the AIIB as an alternative institutional platform, the move was expected from the issue-dependence perspective, as the level of

concentration in developmental finance is fundamentally low. In other policy areas, China's stance has been eclectic and strongly affected by the institutional setting and path dependence. At the same time, the analysis of this paper cannot completely reject the realist claim, as Xi's vision will become more substantiated in the future. Still, the silence of realist theory on the question of "when" is a fundamental flaw. The realist perspective minimizes the policy space for China to be a responsible stakeholder in the developing international order when it points a finger at China as a disgruntled spoiler of the liberal international order. To avoid the enactment of a dangerous self-fulfilling prophecy, the issue warrants further studies into the many dimensions of the rules-based international order and China's orientation toward it.

### Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2016S1A3A2925085).

### References

- Acharya, A. (2017). After liberal hegemony: The advent of a multiplex world order. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 31(3), 271–285.
- Albert, E. (2015, March 17). *A bank too far?* Retrieved from the Council on Foreign Relations website: <https://www.cfr.org/interview/bank-too-far>.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB). (2009). *Infrastructure for a seamless Asia*. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/159348/adbi-infrastructure-seamless-asia.pdf>.
- Baden, B. (2011, October 1). *WTO accession, globalization, and a changing China*. Retrieved from <https://www.chinabusinessreview.com/wto-accession-globalization-and-a-changing-china/>.
- Bailey, M. A., Strezhnev, A., & Voeten, E. (2015). Estimating dynamic state preferences from United Nations voting data. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(2), 430–456. doi: 10.1177/0022002715595700.
- Barnett, M., & Duvall, R. (2005). Power in international politics. *International Organization*, 59(1), 39–75.
- Bearce, D. H., & Bondanella, S. (2007). Intergovernmental organizations, socialization, and member-state interest convergence. *International Organization*, 61(4), 703–733. doi: 10.1017/S0020818307070245.



- Beckley, M. (2011). China's century? Why America's edge will endure. *International Security*, 36(3), 41–78. doi: 10.1162/ISEC\_a\_00066.
- Beller, R. D. (1994). Analyzing the relationship between international law and international politics in China's and Vietnam's territorial dispute over the Spratly Islands. *Texas International Law Journal*, 29(2), 293–320.
- Bull, H., Hurrell, A., & Hoffman, S. (2012). *The anarchical society: A study of order in world politics*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Chai, T. R. (1979). Chinese policy toward the Third World and the superpowers in the UN General Assembly 1971–1977: A voting analysis. *International Organization*, 33(3), 391–403. doi: 10.1017/S0020818300032215.
- Christensen, T. J. (2015). *The China challenge: Shaping the choices of a rising power*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Davis, C. L., & Bermeo, S. B. (2009). Who files? Developing country participation in GATT/WTO adjudication. *The Journal of Politics*, 71(3), 1033–1049. doi: 10.1017/S0022381609090860.
- Debnar, P. (2017). *Thucydides' Melian Dialogue: Commentary, text, and vocabulary*. South Hadley, MA: Paula Debnar.
- Deudney, D., & Ikenberry, G. J. (2009). The myth of the autocratic revival — Why liberal democracy will prevail essay. *Foreign Affairs*, 88, 77–93.
- Dreher, A., & Jensen, N. M. (2007). Independent actor or agent? An empirical analysis of the impact of U.S. interests on International Monetary Fund conditions. *The Journal of Law and Economics*, 50(1), 105–124. doi: 10.1086/508311.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica (2015). Socialization/Psychology. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/551773/socialization>.
- Feng, H. (2006). *The politics of China's accession to the World Trade Organization: The dragon goes global*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Ferdinand, P. (2016). Westward ho — The China dream and “one belt, one road”: Chinese foreign policy under Xi Jinping. *International Affairs*, 92(4), 941–957.
- Flores-Macías, G. A., & Kreps, S. E. (2013). The foreign policy consequences of trade: China's commercial relations with Africa and Latin America, 1992–2006. *The Journal of Politics*, 75(2), 357–371. doi: 10.1017/s0022381613000066.
- Fravel, M. T. (2011). China's strategy in the South China Sea. *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs*, 33(3), 292–319.
- Goldstein, J. L., Kahler, M., Keohane, R. O., & Slaughter, A.-M. (Eds.). (2001). *Legalization and world politics*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Goodman, R., & Jinks, D. (2013). *Socializing states: Promoting human rights through international law*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Gowa, J., & Kim, S. Y. (2005). An exclusive country club: The effects of the GATT on trade, 1950–94. *World Politics*, 57(4), 453–478. doi: 10.1353/wp.2006.0010.
- Haas, P. M. (1992). Introduction: Epistemic communities and international policy coordination. *International Organization*, 46(1), 1–35.
- Hameiri, S., & Jones, L. (2018). China challenges global governance? Chinese international development finance and the AIIB. *International Affairs*, 94(3), 573–593.
- Hong, K. S. (2018). Xi's Chinese dream and identity politics: OBOR, AIIB and hegemony. *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, 58(1), 99–146.
- Hurd, I. (2005). The strategic use of liberal internationalism: Libya and the UN sanctions, 1992–2003. *International Organization*, 59(3), 495–526.
- Ikenberry, G. J. (2000). *After victory: Institutions, strategic restraint, and the rebuilding of order after major wars*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ikenberry, G. I. (2008). The rise of China and the future of the West: Can the liberal system survive? *Foreign Affairs*, 87(1), 23–37.
- Ikenberry, G. I. (2011a). The future of the liberal world order: Internationalism after America. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(3), 55–68.
- Ikenberry, G. J. (2011b). *Liberal Leviathan: The origins, crisis, and transformation of the American world order*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Johnston, A. I. (2013). How new and assertive is China's new assertiveness? *International Security*, 37(4), 7–48. doi: 10.1162/ISEC\_a\_00115.
- Kent, A. (1999). *China, the United Nations, and human rights: The limits of compliance*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Kent, A. (2002). China's international socialization: The role of international organizations. *Global Governance*, 8(3), 343–364.
- Kent, A. (2010). *Beyond compliance: China, international organizations, and global security*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- King, K. (2013). *China's aid and soft power in Africa: The case of education and training*. Suffolk, UK: James Currey.
- Koh, H. (1996). *Transnational legal process* (Faculty Scholarship Series No. 2096). Retrieved from Yale Law School website: [https://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/fss\\_papers/2096](https://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/fss_papers/2096).
- Koo, J. (2016, July, 22). *China's response in the wake of the South China Sea arbitration* (IFANS FOCUS No. 56E). Retrieved from <http://www.ifans.go.kr/knda/ifans/eng/pblct/PblctList.do#>.
- Ku, J., & Mirasola, C. (2016). *Tracking China's compliance with the South China Sea arbitral award: Traditional fishing rights inside the lagoon at Scarborough Shoal*. Retrieved from Lawfare website: <https://www.lawfareblog.com/tracking-chinas-compliance-south-china-sea-arbitral-award-traditional-fishing-rights-inside-lagoon>.

- Lampton, D. M. (2008). *The three faces of Chinese power: Might, money, and minds*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Li, X. (2012). Understanding China's behavioral change in the WTO dispute settlement system: Power, capacity, and normative constraints in trade adjudication. *Asian Survey*, 52(6), 1111–1137. doi: 10.1525/as.2012.52.6.1111.
- Lipsy, P. Y. (2015). Explaining institutional change: Policy areas, outside options, and the Bretton Woods Institutions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(2), 341–356. doi: 10.1111/ajps.12130.
- Lipsy, P. Y. (2017). *Renegotiating the world order: Institutional change in international relations*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mastanduno, M. (2009). System maker and privilege taker: U.S. power and the international political economy. *World Politics*, 61(1), 121–154.
- McDorman, T. L. (2016, November 18). The South China Sea Arbitration. *American Society of International Law*, 20(17). Retrieved from <https://www.asil.org/insights/volume/20/issue/17/south-china-sea-arbitration>.
- Morgenthau, H., Thompson, K., & Clinton, D. (2005). *Politics among nations*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Mrosovsky, R. C. (2008). International law's unhelpful role in the Senkaku Islands. *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law*, 29(4), 903–946.
- Narlikar, A., & Vickers, B. (Eds.). (2009). *Leadership and change in the multilateral trading system*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Republic of Letters.
- Park, M. (2017). China-led AIIB as a gradual modification of Asian financial order: Chinese strategies to launch new financial institution. *Journal of International and Area Studies*, 24(2), 57–76.
- Pekkanen, S. M. (2001). Aggressive legalism: The rules of the WTO and Japan's emerging trade strategy. *World Economy*, 24(5), 707–737. doi: 10.1111/1467-9701.00377.
- Piquero, A. R., Fagan, J., Mulvey, E. P., Steinberg, L., & Odgers, C. (2005). Developmental trajectories of legal socialization among serious adolescent offenders. *The Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 96(1), 267–298.
- Qin, J. Y. (2007). Trade, investment and beyond: The impact of WTO accession on China's legal system. *The China Quarterly*, 191, 720–741.
- Schweller, R. L., & Pu, X. (2011). After unipolarity: China's visions of international order in an era of U.S. decline. *International Security*, 36(1), 41–72. doi: 10.1162/ISEC\_a\_00044.
- Steinfeld, E. S. (2012). *Playing our game: Why China's rise doesn't threaten the West* (Reprint Edn.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Waltz, K. N. (2010). *Theory of international politics*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

- Whomersley, C. (2016). The South China Sea: The award of the tribunal in the case brought by Philippines against China — A critique. *Chinese Journal of International Law*, 15(2), 239–264. doi: 10.1093/chinesejil/jmw011.
- Wilson, P. (2009). The English School's approach to international law. In C. Navari (Ed.), *Theorising international society* (pp. 167–188). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. doi: 10.1057/9780230234475\_9.
- Yahuda, M. (2013). China's new assertiveness in the South China Sea. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 22(81), 446–459. doi: 10.1080/10670564.2012.748964.
- Yeo, Y. (2018). China's policy of "going out" 2.0: Ideas, interests, and the rise of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, 16(3), 367–387.

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.