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Journal of Chinese Political Science

ISSN 1080-6954

J OF CHIN POLIT SCI

DOI 10.1007/s11366-012-9202-6



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Diverse Multilateralism: Four Strategies in China's Multilateral Diplomacy

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Abstract This article addresses China's multilateral diplomacy by identifying four distinct strategies: watching, engaging, circumventing, and shaping. The typology builds on two literatures: power transition theory, and the more recent “assertiveness” discourse in the West. Drawing from a range of cases in both the economic and security domains, the article argues that China's multilateralism is diverse, and that it cannot be un-problematically characterized as either status-quo or revisionist in nature. However, the general trend appears to be towards engagement, but with an assertive tact as China's interests become further entangled in the business of international institutions.

Keywords China · Institutions · United Nations · Multilateralism · Foreign Policy

Introduction

In the past several years, China has become a more noticeable actor across an array of multilateral institutions and regimes, in fields ranging from regional security to economic governance. China's participation itself, as well as its acceptance of the norms embodied in those institutions, has been taken as a measure of whether or not the PRC is developing into a “status quo” or “revisionist” power [1]. A state that

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participates and does not seek fundamental changes in the structure of the existing order is said to be following a status-quo trajectory, while one that does not engage, or aspires to change the rules, is oriented towards revisionism.

This article challenges the premise that China's relationship to international institutions—including formal organizations and regimes involving more than two states—can be used as such a metric.¹ Rather, we argue that the nature of China's participation varies across two dimensions: revisionism, on one hand, and assertiveness, on the other. This leads to a refined typology of China's strategic options in which four choices are present. We label these as “watching,” “engaging,” “circumventing,” and “shaping.” The point is that status quo behavior can be quite assertive, and thus unpleasant to Western policymakers, while revisionist behavior may be relatively passive, insofar as it avoids, and does not directly challenge, existing institutions. The degree to which China opts for one choice or another is contingent on the situational costs and benefits of doing so. The result is a diverse multilateralism, one that varies across institution and is in constant flux.

The article proceeds in three main sections. The first explains the relationship between power transition theory and the discourse of China as an “assertive” power, showing that the two are not parallel, but rather orthogonal to one another. The second builds on this conceptualization to identify four possible foreign policy strategies that account for both revisionism and assertiveness, and suggests conditions under which we are likely to observe each one. The third section applies this typology to China's multilateral diplomacy, and provides illustrations of each strategy, drawing from cases that include China's role in the UN Security Council, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the International Court of Justice, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, and others.

The conclusion is predictive, identifying significant future constraints on three of the strategies identified: watching, circumventing, and shaping. The primary expectation is that the PRC will continue to operate within existing institutions in a status-quo manner, but will be inclined to use its power within those institutions to pursue an increasing range of global interests. However, there will be exceptions, and an adequate characterization of China's multilateral diplomacy will take into account the full spectrum of strategies available to policymakers in Beijing.

Power Transition and “Assertiveness” in China's Rise

Recent discussions in the Western discourse about China's geopolitical and economic rise have centered on two questions. The first, based on power transition theory,² is whether the PRC is likely to develop into a “status quo” power, or whether it is on the

¹ Note that we are not using the term “institutions” in the sense of constitutive norms, such as sovereignty, democracy, nationalism, equality, and so forth—what English School theorists term “primary institutions.” See: Barry Buzan [2], and Qin Yaqing [3]. The reason is that our focus is on multilateral diplomacy, not norms per se.

² See, e.g., A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler [4], Randall L. Schweller [5], and Robert Gilpin [6].

road to “revisionism.”³ Despite some ambiguity and contention about the meaning of the terms,⁴ a “status quo” orientation generally implies a basic satisfaction with the rules, distribution of power in regional and global terms, and hierarchy of prestige within the international order, while a “revisionist” orientation connotes a motivation to alter any of these components.⁵ In this sense, power transition theory focuses not only on the dyadic interaction between China and the U.S., but more broadly on how China engages the international system writ large, including regimes and institutions established, and traditionally controlled by, the U.S. and its allies.

Within the debate, a variety of views have been expressed. At the optimistic end of the spectrum, based on a content analysis of their speeches, Huiyun Feng writes that the attitudes of the three paramount Chinese leaders since Mao “are not revisionist in nature [12].” For his part, while allowing that even a “status quo” state may fall victim to security dilemma dynamics, Alastair Iain Johnston argues that, “...it is hard to conclude that China is a clearly revisionist state operating outside, or barely inside, the boundaries of a so-called international community.”⁶ Most pessimistically, John Mearsheimer contends that, if China’s rapid modernization continues apace, China’s expanding power and confidence would portend conflict with the regional order. As he writes, China “...would surely pursue regional hegemony,” thus altering the regional balance of power between itself and the U.S. in East Asia.⁷

A second, more recent, debate has concerned the extent of “assertiveness” in China’s foreign relations. The meaning of this term, too, has been contested, though typically points to a combination of a “brash tone in foreign policy pronouncements” and “the promulgation of more aggressive or confrontational policies in specific areas [13].” This discourse emerged in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, when Western observers noted that the PRC became relatively more willing to challenge the U.S. and its allies on issues ranging from climate change talks, to negotiations on the Iran nuclear issue, to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, and, most recently, to the South China Sea dispute.⁸

Scholarly interpretations of China’s “assertiveness” have been mixed. Christopher Hughes, for instance, argues that the phenomenon represents a conjunction of geopolitical ambitions and long-held, nationalistic “resentment” seeping into foreign policy decision-making.⁹ Alastair Iain Johnston posits a more cautious perspective, which is that China’s behavior is constrained by four factors: clear understanding of U.S. diplomatic “red lines,” nuclear deterrence, relatively minor ideological

³ Johnston [7]; Avery Goldstein [8]; John Mearsheimer [9].

⁴ For instance, Lanxin Xiang has argued that China’s strict interpretation of the norm of sovereignty was not revisionist, but rather a reaffirmation of the Westphalian principles that undergird the UN Charter. In response, David Shambaugh contended that an impetus for intervention had become the “norm” among Western states in the 1990s, and that China was revisionist in the sense of bucking this trend. Our understanding of revisionism, in terms of either circumventing or shaping, follows Xiang’s, which we feel better reflects the meaning of revisionism as postulated by theorists such as Gilpin, Organski, and Kugler. See: Lanxin Xiang [10], and David Shambaugh [11].

⁵ For a discussion, see: Johnston, “Is China a Status Quo Power?” 8–12.

⁶ Johnston, “Is China a Status Quo Power?” 49.

⁷ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pg. 401.

⁸ For instance, John Pomfret opined that, “China’s increasingly anti-Western tone” casts doubt on the “long-held assumption...that a more powerful and prosperous China would be more positively inclined toward Western values and systems.” John Pomfret [14].

⁹ Christopher Hughes [15]. See also: Gilbert Rozman [16].

differences (compared to those in the U.S.-Soviet relationship), and economic interdependence [17]. More discretely, David Shambaugh shows that there is actually a “spectrum of elite opinion” within China about how actively to contend with the U.S., with attitudes very much in flux.¹⁰

How do these two debates about China’s rise relate to one another? At first glance, there appears to be a direct correspondence between “revisionism” and “assertiveness.” In particular, the more revisionist China’s attitudes and behaviors, the more assertive it is likely to be in its interactions with the U.S. and other states. Indeed, this admixture of the two is represented in Michael Swaine’s characterization of pessimistic U.S. popular attitudes that “...China is transitioning to a less cooperative, more assertive, fundamentally revisionist, and in many ways anti-Western approach to vital global and bilateral issues...”¹¹

Arguably, however, the relationship between revisionism and assertiveness is not parallel, but rather orthogonal. For example, antagonism in U.S.-China relations may reflect a revisionist tendency if China’s goal is to alter the regional distribution of power or to introduce new norms or values into the international system, but it may also be status-quo-oriented if it occurs in the context of the more prosaic diplomatic friction that often occurs between states. For instance, arguments between the U.S., China and others about how to respond to the Iran nuclear problem in 2010, though intense, were embedded in a commonly-shared acceptance of the UN Security Council as the legitimate arbiter of international threats, as well as to a commitment to the global non-proliferation regime [19].

Similarly, while a more benign foreign policy may affirm the status quo, the absence of Sino-American conflict does not necessarily imply the absence of revisionist intentions. Beijing may find ways to circumvent the West in a quieter attempt to revise the international order, or at least harbor the ambition of doing so in the future. For example, despite its potential appeal to some states, Chinese policymakers have refrained from touting the “Beijing Consensus,” a model of development that, in contrast with the West, does not place a premium on liberal norms or institutions.¹² Yet, as Jeffrey Legro points out, China might more actively promote such a vision as a “rallying point for resistance” in the developing world if the PRC did choose to challenge the existing order [21].

By juxtaposing the strategic choices available to the PRC in both discourses, it is possible to describe Chinese foreign policy attitudes and behaviors in two-dimensional terms. This leads to a more realistic, but still parsimonious, topography of strategic choices by China that can be identified and tracked. The following sections apply this approach to China’s multilateral diplomacy, demonstrating that

¹⁰ In particular, Shambaugh identifies six schools of thought within China’s discourse community, ranging from a relatively bellicose *realpolitik* camp to more conciliatory “selective multilateralists.” See: David Shambaugh [18].

¹¹ Swaine, “Perceptions of an Assertive China,” 1.

¹² For instance, even though Wen Jiabao has rejected the idea of a globally-applicable “Chinese model,” he has said that, “All countries have to learn from other countries’ experience in development. At the same time, they have to follow a path suited to their own national conditions and based on the reality of their own countries.” Such language is not particularly assertive, but revisionist in its implicit rejection of prescriptive growth models. See: “Full Text of Chinese Premier’s Press Conference in Egypt,” [20].

four distinct strategies have been pursued, and illuminating the conditions under which we are likely to observe each one.

Four Strategies in China's Multilateral Diplomacy

A main element of China's contemporary diplomacy is its gradual acceptance and adoption of multilateralism, meaning participation in efforts with three or more parties to solve commonly-shared problems.¹³ An indication of this is the sheer number of regional and international organizations China has joined. Since Beijing replaced Taiwan as the legal representative of China to the United Nations in October 1971, China has expanded its membership from participation in only one intergovernmental organization (IGO) and 58 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to 49 IGOs in 2007 and 1,568 NGOs in 2003, respectively [29]. China has also participated in numerous ad-hoc negotiations on topics ranging from public health, to arms control and climate change.

As mentioned above, China's role in multilateral institutions is linked to the debate about whether China is a "status quo" power, satisfied with the current structure of the international order, or rather a "revisionist" one, bent on upturning and reshaping the order to its own advantage. The way in which China behaves within institutions is treated as an indicator of the type of rising power that China is, since those institutions largely reflect the norms, regulations and power distribution that constitute the existing order.¹⁴ Thus, if China tries to modify or replace those rules, then we have some evidence that the PRC is not a satisfied power.

Indeed, different scholars have arrived at different conclusions about the nature of China's involvement in international institutions. Alastair Iain Johnston, for one, finds that China's growing participation rates, conformity with the norms embodied within regimes, and acceptance of the "rules" of formal organizations all suggest that China is behaving as a status quo-oriented power.¹⁵ Barry Buzan, in contrast, terms China a "reformist revisionist" power, as it "...accepts some of the institutions of international society for a mixture of calculated and instrumental reasons...But it resists, and wants to reform, others."¹⁶ John Ikenberry makes a more provisional case that China will likely desire to further integrate into Western-led regimes, but only if the U.S. works to strengthen them [30].

China's policies towards and within institutions has also been cited in the discourse on "assertiveness." Examining China's role in a range of security and economic institutions, Stephen Olson and Clyde Prestowitz conclude that it has "demonstrated an increasingly assertive and proactive stance within these organizations [31]." Gilbert Rozman writes that China adopted an assertive posture towards multilateral talks on North Korea in 2010, a result of which will be a stunting of the prospects of deeper multilateralism in Northeast Asia.¹⁷ In partial contrast, while

¹³ See, e.g., Christopher R. Hughes [22]; Avery Goldstein [23]; Hongying Wang [24]; Evan Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel [25]; Marc Lanteigne [26]; Thomas G. Moore [27]; Kuik Cheng-Chwee [28].

¹⁴ Johnston, "Is China a Status Quo Power?" 8–12.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 12–25.

¹⁶ Buzan, "China in International Society: Is 'Peaceful Rise' Possible?" 18–9.

¹⁷ Rozman, "Chinese Strategic Thinking on Multilateral Regional Security in Northeast Asia," 313.

recognizing a hardening of Beijing's negotiating stance on territorial issues, Michael Swaine observes that China refrained from labeling the South China Sea issue as a "core interest," likely in a bid not to exacerbate Southeast Asian concerns about its intentions [32].

As the previous section argued, the power transition and assertiveness debates are linked to one another. By considering the attributes of revisionism as well as assertiveness, we are in a position to characterize China's attitudes in behavior along two interrelated dimensions. Applied to China's multilateral diplomacy, we may observe a menu of options that include what we call "watching," "engaging," "circumventing," and "shaping." These are illustrated in Fig. 1 and explained in the following sections.

Watching

In some cases, Beijing takes a hands-off approach to international institutions. It dispatches representatives and experts to meetings, but generally does not promote an agenda of its own. This does not imply apathy. China is not necessarily, as Qin Yaqing suggests, "detached," or indifferent, about the institution in which it is operating [33]. Instead, under a "watching" approach, the PRC is attentive, and learns about what the institution does, how power is exercised within it, and how its responsibilities and authority relate to China's interests. Hence, we would expect China to adopt a "watching" strategy when it first joins an institution, lacks adequate technical knowledge of the issues being addressed therein, or does not have a clear sense of its interests in a particular negotiation.

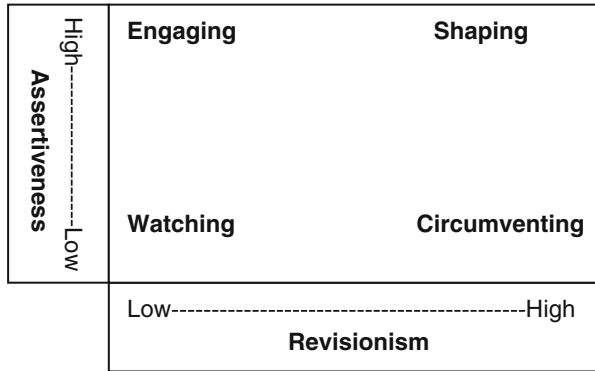
Indeed, it is when China adopts such an attitude that it is most prone to efforts by other states to transmit norms. Alastair Iain Johnston describes three processes of socialization in institutions: mimicking, social influence, and persuasion. Johnston argues that each of these processes are likely to be most effective with respect to a "novice" within the group, since newcomers do not necessarily understand the rules of the game, desire to fit in and be accepted by older members, and may lack a clear sense of their own objectives.¹⁸ In the context of the European Union, for instance, Jeffrey Checkel argues that persuasion works best when the target is in a "novel and uncertain environment and thus cognitively motivated to analyze new information [37]." Whether these processes are effective or not, the point is that the watchful actor does not challenge the rules and processes of the institution.

Engaging

The problem with the socialization argument is that its relevance diminishes the longer an actor belongs to an institution. Whereas a "novice" may be relatively susceptible to influence, a more mature actor understands how the game operates, has a clearer idea of what its interests are, and has developed a set of effective tactics to achieve its aims. A strategy of engagement implies that a state takes a more active and, when necessary, assertive, role in negotiations. For instance, it may form coalitions, exercise veto power (if it has such authority), attempt to place items on

¹⁸ Alastair Iain Johnston [34]; see also: Alastair Iain Johnston [35], and Ann Kent [36].

Fig. 1 Four strategies in China's multilateral diplomacy



(or keep them off) the agenda, and use tactics such as persuasion and side-payments to convince opponents to accede to its goals.

However, a defining attribute of an engagement strategy is that, an actor does not pursue its goals in a way that challenges the regulations and authority structures which constitute the institution. Though it may, at times, challenge the proposals of others, and pursue policy preferences not shared by its interlocutors, it is still a system-affirming actor within the body. We would expect to observe China engaging when it believes that doing so will yield a “steady stream of benefits” [38] that outweigh the costs of adhering to rules that may constrain China’s choices or limit its power within an institution. Indeed, it makes sense that we would frequently observe such a choice, since regimes are set up to allow members to exploit the gains of cooperation.¹⁹

Jianwei Wang notes such a tendency in China’s multilateralism, especially since 2000. He writes that China has shifted “from passive response to active participation and even initiation,” citing its role in UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs), especially the leadership role it took in the UN response to civil conflict in Cambodia in the late 1980s and early 1990s [41]. As discussed below, although China’s positions in the UN have sometimes been at odds with the U.S., but Beijing has not sought to undermine the institution or alter its fundamental decision-making structures or norms, as embodied in the UN Charter.

Circumventing

Although simply pursuing its goals within the context of existing regimes may permit an actor to secure its interests, there are also cases in which it may perceive that the current system does not provide a net benefit. When this occurs, the actor may pursue a course of “circumventing,” in which it chooses to operate outside the existing architecture, and may indeed help to establish novel regimes with goals, rules and structures of their own. Scholars have described a “new phase” in global politics in which “the directionality and hence fulcrum of global interactions are moving away from Western power anchors and toward new centers outside the West.”²⁰ As

¹⁹ Robert Keohane [39]; Kenneth Abbott and Duncan Snidal [40].

²⁰ Eli Ratner, Naazneen Barma, Steven Weber and Giacomo Chiozza [42]; see also: Naazneen Barma, Eli Ratner and Steven Weber [43].

evidence, they cite trade patterns and UN General Assembly voting data which appear to suggest that non-Western states have begun to reorient their foreign policies towards each other and away from the West.

Although it does not imply a direct challenge to existing institutions or norms, “circumventing” the current order is a problematic strategy for China. This is so for several reasons. First, as the strategies of “watching” and “engaging” imply, China has joined existing institutions for good reasons: it has anticipated that participating will, on balance, be beneficial. In most cases, there is no impetus to work around the West. Second, circumvention raises the challenge of damaging relations with status-quo powers; hence we would only expect to observe genuine efforts to do so when the political costs are relatively minor in relation to the anticipated rewards. Third, circumvention raises the problem of duplicating existing functions, and so one instance in which this strategy would be feasible would be when there is no overlap between new institutions and old ones.

Shaping

For a dissatisfied state, a more assertive choice would be to attempt to shape the underlying rules and procedures of an existing body to better suit its interests. One example of “shaping” concerns attempts to change the membership of the UNSC. In 2005, Germany, India and Brazil submitted a proposal to the UN General Assembly that would alter the composition of the Council by adding six permanent, but non-veto-holding members, including themselves, as well as two African states. A second proposal was offered by a group of states known as “Uniting for Consensus,” which would add ten additional non-permanent members to the existing ten, apportioned along regional lines.²¹ While neither proposal is likely to be approved in the near future, if ever, they represent attempts to alter the “rules of the game [44].”

As with circumventing, there are various limitations on the extent to which China would want to pursue a “shaping” strategy. First, doing so would have to be expected to result in a gain in the ability of the institution to help secure China’s interests. Second, China is most likely to shape an existing institution if doing so would not threaten the core interests of the other key players; attempting to force reforms over the objections of the U.S. or other powerful actors would not only likely be infeasible, but would also strain relations with states with which China desires to maintain good relations. Third is that China is likely to shape institutions only when there is broad support for reform; since China does not seek to appear revisionist, it must be able to demonstrate widespread consensus for changing the foundations of a preexisting institution, lest it risk a political backlash. This means that China will pursue a “shaping” strategy sparingly and with great caution, as we would expect from a pragmatic state.

In sum, China is oriented towards an adaptable, strategic approach to international institutions and regimes. We do not expect that China will adopt a ‘one-size-fits-all’

²¹ See, respectively, “Brazil, Germany and India: Draft Resolution,” UN General Assembly Document A/60/L.46, January 9, 2006, available at: <http://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/0106gfour.pdf> and “Uniting for Consensus” Group of States Introduces Text on Security Council Reform to General Assembly,’ U.N. Press Release GA/10371, January 26, 2005, available at: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/ga10371.doc.htm>.

posture, but rather that it will tailor its participation to the constraints and opportunities presented by different institutions. In many cases, this will mean following a status-quo approach, either in terms of watching, or by actively engaging. In others, it will mean seeking to revise the existing order, either by working around current regimes or by seeking to reshape the rules that constitute them. The next section illustrates each of these choices in practice.

China's Diverse Multilateralism

Viewed through the prism of the four choices described above, China's multilateral diplomacy in the reform era is not monochromatic, but rather a mix of approaches, varied across time and context. Examining a range of economic and security institutions, this section illuminates how China's multilateralism varies both in terms of 'status-quo-ness' and in terms of assertiveness, leading to four distinct strategies.

Watching

As suggested above, China usually adopts a watching and learning attitude during the early stages of its involvement in institutions. An example is China's interaction in the UNSC in the first decade after it joined that body in 1971. As Samuel S. Kim relates that Chinese diplomats tended to "say little," avoiding representatives of the major powers in its "corridor diplomacy," and relying on nonparticipation and abstentions to register its ideological disapproval of certain agenda items, especially those concerning peacekeeping operations, rather than exercising its veto power or attempting to shape resolutions through diplomacy [45]. Writing in 1974, Kim likened China's behavior in the UN to a "cautious and diligent apprentice, mastering her new trade and adjusting her crude ideological preconceptions to the institutional milieu."²² Even in the two instances in which China exercised its veto in the 1970s, the first on the appointment of Kurt Waldheim as Secretary General and the second on Bangladesh's application for UN membership, it soon softened its position, most likely to reduce the widespread criticism it faced from its resistance.²³ As a "novice" in the UN, China was perhaps especially vulnerable to social opprobrium, as predicted by Johnston.²⁴

Another example of "watching" is China's attitude toward the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The Chinese government's attitude towards international arbitration and the ICJ has been cautious and gradually evolving. Before the mid-1980s, China did not agree to write any kind of arbitration clause into bilateral agreements and treaties (except some trade agreements) with other countries, and made reservations to those clauses in multilateral treaties and conventions it signed, ratified or joined. Since 1980s, the ICJ, as the major judicial organ of the United Nations, has improved substantially. Countries, including China, have gradually changed their attitudes of

²² *Ibid.*, 328–329; see also: Samuel S. Kim [46]. Chu Shulong similarly attributes China's passive orientation to its desire better to understand how the institution operated. Chu Shulong [47].

²³ Kim, *China, the United Nations and World Order*, 205–207.

²⁴ Johnston, *Social States*, 24–5.

mistrust towards the institution. While insisting on settling disputes through negotiation and consultation for some issues involving significant national interests, the PRC no longer makes reservations to those arbitration clauses of specific and technical treaties such as trade, environment, transportation and culture.

For the most part, China has been watching the operations of the Court and learning its rules and norms. It was not until April 2009 that China, for the first time, officially submitted an opinion in a case in front of the ICJ: a written statement on the question of the legality of Kosovo's 'Unilateral Declaration of Independence.' However, thus far, China has not submitted any dispute in which China is a party to the Court.²⁵

Engaging

China moves from passivity to engagement within institutions as it gains experience and confidence that it may productively employ the machinery of the body to advance its interests. This is exemplified in its evolving activity within the UN Security Council (UNSC). China's passive approach in the 1970s gave way to a more active strategy in the 1980s. In 1982, the 12th Party Congress announced an "independent foreign policy of peace" (*duli zizhu waijiao zhengce*), stressing positive ties with both superpowers and decisions based on "individual merit" rather than on ideological grounds.²⁶ As a result, China began to work more constructively, abandoning, for instance, its practice of regular abstentions in Security Council votes.

More robust engagement within the UNSC ensued in the post-Cold War era.²⁷ In November 1990, then-Foreign Minister Qian Qichen traveled to the Middle East in an attempt to diffuse tensions with Iraq, meeting with Saddam Hussein [50]. The following year, China sent personnel to Cambodia as part of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), its first major commitment of troops to a UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO). Participation in 18 missions over the next two decades would follow.²⁸ China's abstention rate in Security Council votes remained low. Between November 1990 and May 2007, Beijing abstained on only 49 out of 1,079 votes that were approved, a rate of 4.5 %. It approved peacekeeping missions on five continents, economic sanctions against 16 states, and the use of force in Afghanistan.²⁹ In 2000, China organized a "P5 Summit," which coincided with the

²⁵ Anonymous blog entry, "Qianxi woguo heping jieju guoji zhengduan de lilun yu shijian" ("On the Theory and Practice of China's Settlement of International Disputes"), available at: <http://www.tztyw.com/Department/she/lkio/200908/53671.html>.

²⁶ For a summary of China's foreign policy changes in the 1980s see, e.g., Michael Yahuda [48].

²⁷ In a speech to the General Assembly in October 1991, Qian Qichen, China's foreign minister, said that, "In the future as always, China will strictly observe the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, earnestly perform its duties, and together with the vast number of member states will actively support the work of the United Nations." "Qian Qichen Addresses UN General Assembly," [49].

²⁸ China's first participation in a PKO was in Namibia (UNTAG) in 1989, in which it allocated 20 personnel.

²⁹ China also abstained on the 1990 resolution permitting the U.S. use of force in Iraq. Data on PKOs is readily available through the Department of Peacekeeping Operations website, at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/index.asp>. Data on the frequency of UN sanctions meetings have been compiled by the Global Policy Forum, and are available online, at: <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/tables-and-charts-on-the-security-council-0-82/sanctions-committees-meetings.html>. Detailed information on sanctions can be found on the Security Council's website: <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/>.

Millennium Summit in New York, calling for a stronger role for the UNSC in the 21st century.³⁰

In more recent years, China's participation in the UNSC has become increasingly assertive vis-à-vis the U.S. and its diplomatic partners. For instance, China worked to block Western-sponsored proposals to condemn the behavior of the regimes in Myanmar and Zimbabwe, and exercised influence to dilute resolutions on the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs, as well as towards Sudan with respect to the Darfur crisis. This is understandable, given Chinese economic and strategic interests in these regimes. It is important to note, though, that the PRC did not seek fundamental changes in the structures of authority or principles of the UNSC, as embodied in the UN Charter.³¹ This exemplifies the point that a state can be both highly assertive and non-revisionist in a particular institutional context.

Why did China adopt an engaging strategy towards the UNSC? First is the possibility that its veto power gives China a tool for responding to the perceived excesses of U.S. unilateralism. Although the U.S. has been able to act without Security Council authorization in Iraq, as well as in Kosovo in the 1990s, Chinese strategists appear to believe that the lack of "collective legitimization" carried by a Security Council resolution can "complicate" U.S. diplomacy by souring global opinion and reducing the number of potential coalition partners.³² Second is that China's engagement symbolizes its commitment to behave in accordance with pre-existing rules and institutions, thus enhancing its image as a "responsible" power. Its participation in regional multilateral security efforts, beginning in the mid-1990s, has also been explained by reference to its desire to reduce suspicions about its intentions, especially after crises in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait.³³ China's institutional support for the UN, participation in missions, and, especially, its public positions in favor of the norm of state sovereignty and against the unilateral use of force have led some to characterize China as a conservative power, set against perceptions that it was the U.S. that has behaved as a "revisionist."³⁴ Third, China's status as a veto-holding power ensures its influence on a range of regional issues to which its security and economic interests are increasingly tied. One of those advantages is that China's voice will be considered on problems stretching from East Asia

³⁰ See: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 'Full Text of UN Permanent Five Summit Document,' November 15, 2000, available at: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjbx/zjjg/gjs/gjzzyhy/2594/2602/t115216.htm>.

³¹ See: Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Andrew Small [51] and Joel Wuthnow [52].

³² Goldstein, "The Diplomatic Face of China's Grand Strategy," 851. Eric Voeten argues that the ability of a superpower to threaten outside action increases its bargaining leverage in multilateral discussions, but that, given the veto power of other states, the superpower is unlikely to achieve its ideal point. Eric Voeten [53]. The phrase "collective legitimization" was first used by Inis Claude. See: Inis Claude [54].

³³ Goldstein, "The Diplomatic Face of China's Grand Strategy," 844–7; Shambaugh, "China or America: Which is the Revisionist Power?" 28; Alastair Iain Johnston and Paul Evans [55]; Michael D. Swaine and Ashley Tellis [56].

³⁴ For instance, John Ikenberry has written that: "Indeed, what is striking about Asia is silence on the big questions. This is clearly the case with China, which has been quietly working with and within existing frameworks of global cooperation. Arguably, over the last 7 years, it is the US—not China—that has been most "revisionist" in its global orientation. China is more worried that the US will abandon its commitment to the old, Western-oriented global rules and institutions than it is eager to advance a new set of Asian-generated rules and institutions. G. John Ikenberry [57]; see also, Xiang, "Washington's Misguided China Policy," 7–24.

to the Middle East, to resource-rich states further afield (e.g. Sudan and Angola).³⁵ This explains why China, despite its public statements to the contrary, has not acted to increase the size of the Council or of its veto-holding members.³⁶

A second example of engagement concerns China's involvement in the international human rights regime, especially with respect to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). As background, China's human rights legalization is a byproduct of its "reform and opening up" to the outside world [61], resulting from domestic demands and international pressure. China began to accede to international human rights laws in 1980 and has since joined numerous treaties in this realm.³⁷ It has also been reforming its legal system, integrating international human rights laws into domestic legislation, which has arguably led to a measure of greater freedom for Chinese society.³⁸ Chengqiu Wu argues that China's response to international humanitarian crises has changed impressively, symbolized by its playing a visible role in alleviating the Darfur crisis [62]. Jing Chen also points out that the fact China was elected as a member state of the new UNHRC in 2006 shows that China's progress in protecting human rights has been acknowledged by most of the states in the world.³⁹ However, while the Chinese government regularly issues reports with statistics showing considerable progress in protecting human rights, China is often singled out as one of the worst human rights violators in the world [64]. Randall Peerenboom argues China is subjected to a double standard because it outperforms countries in its income class on most other indicators except on civil and political rights.⁴⁰

Facing Western pressure after the 1989 Tiananmen Incident, Beijing started to exercise influence in international forums such as UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), the precursor to the UNHRC, rather than withdrawing from the international human rights regime, because Beijing desired to maintain positive ties with the West to promote its own economic development.⁴¹ In 1981, China was elected to be a member state of the UNCHR and reelected every time since then and elected to the new UNHRC (which replaced the UNCHR in 2006). From 1990 to 2005, China successfully defeated "anti-China" draft resolutions on human rights proposed by the U.S. and its allies 11 times.⁴² Some argue that China has maneuvered within the UNHRC to block US-sponsored texts condemning its practice of suppressing religious freedom and crushing dissent by warning certain developing countries that their

³⁵ Specifically, Sudan is a major oil exporter to the PRC, while Zimbabwe, along with South Africa, supplies platinum and iron ore. On Africa, see: Jonathan Holslag [58], Dennis M. Tull [59].

³⁶ J. Mohan Malik [60]. One of the seven "principles" of Security Council reform that China supports is "broad consensus," which seems particularly infeasible. It also opposes a "time limit" for reform, or a forced vote on a non-consensus proposal. See, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Position Paper of the People's Republic of China on the United Nations Reforms," June 7, 2005, available at: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjbj/zjzg/gjs/gjzzyhy/2594/2602/t199318.htm>.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 729.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 753.

³⁹ Jing Chen [63]; also see, Yang Jingde, "Lianheguo renquan lishihui gongzuo zu shunli jieshu dui Zhongguo renquan shen yi," ("UN Human Rights Council Finishes its Review of China's Human Rights"), *Xinhua*, February 14, 2009, available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2009-02/14/content_10820263.htm.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁴² See: Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States, "China Foils U.S. Anti-China Bid on Human Rights," April 16, 2004, available at: <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zl/zgrq/t85437.htm>.

chances of Chinese aid were intimately linked to the way they vote in the Commission.⁴³ As this example illustrates, China has been willing to use the existing machinery of the UN to protect itself by excluding sensitive items from the agenda. Engagement does not necessarily result in outcomes that the West favors, but it also does not fundamentally alter the current architecture of the regime or organization.

Circumventing

When operating within a given institution is, on balance, costly, an alternative is to work around that body. China's interaction with the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of OECD on foreign aid issues illustrates this strategy. China has upheld the principle of foreign aid without conditions attached since the 1950s and has criticized the practice of using foreign aid to interfere in the internal politics of recipient countries. With rapid economic growth and its global ambition, China in recent years has increased its foreign aid worldwide and has gradually become a competitor to the developed countries as an aid donor. China's "no-strings-attached" approach to foreign aid challenges the West's efforts to pressure developing countries to adopt its model of good governance by offering conditional aid. To illustrate, Angola broke off talks with the IMF in 2007 and turned to China for billions of dollars in oil-backed loans because of the attractiveness of China's offer in comparison to IMF's strict conditionality.

Facing such a challenge, the OECD has tried to draw China into aid governance mechanisms such as the DAC and in-country donor committees [66]. However, given its long-standing aid policy and growing economic interests in the developing world, especially in countries with abundant mineral and energy resources, China has indirectly challenged OECD's aid policies. In doing so, China has aligned itself with the interests of African states.⁴⁴ For instance, Beijing has provided aid to Sudan and Zimbabwe and blocked Western countries' attempts to impose sanctions on both countries in the Security Council. In this instance, the risk-reward calculus of operating outside a Western-led regime tipped in favor of circumvention, primarily due to China's strategic interests in the developing world.

A second example of circumvention is China's role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which was established by China, Russia, and four Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) in June, 2001, with the aim of collectively addressing regional security challenges, such as terrorism and narcotics trafficking. China's efforts, through the SCO, to re-structure strategic relationships with its neighbors and to coordinate among members and observers, demonstrate its willingness to create new institutions that better serve its interests. In June, 2009, for instance, Hu Jintao announced a loan of \$10 Billion to the SCO to shore up members faltering in the global downturn. As argued in the *Economist*, "China doesn't only buy loyalty with documents, but with money given at a low percentage."⁴⁵ Some analysts contend that China, mainly through the SCO, will dominate the Central Asia in the next decade.⁴⁶

⁴³ Michael J. Dennis [65]; also see, "Who Will Condemn China?", *The Economist*, March 24, 2001, 23.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 285

⁴⁵ See: "Riches in the Near Abroad," *The Economist*, January 28, 2010.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Revisionist tendencies are arguably present inasmuch as China, through the SCO, advocates an alternative set of norms governing collective security. In contrast to the focus on humanitarian intervention and preventive engagement advocated by the UN Department of Peacekeeping, as well as NATO, the SCO is attuned more narrowly to the narrow security interests of member governments [67]. Moreover, the SCO does not involve a joint security guarantee among its members, but operates on a looser principle of selective cooperation [68]. Finally, the SCO has been criticized as cultivating a “Shanghai Spirit” of promoting authoritarian values in Central Asia. Given that most SCO members rank as authoritarian regimes, it is not surprising that the SCO Charter is almost devoid of any mention of democracy and, unlike NATO, there is no requirement that prospective members take steps to democratize [69]. Whereas individual regimes face the pressures of democratic transition, as witnessed in the 2011 “Arab Spring,” cooperating in a multilateral context may enhance their shared values and political systems while, at the same time, promoting common strategic interests.

Though revisionist in the sense of generating a collective security institution based on alternative principles, the SCO is not particularly assertive vis-à-vis existing bodies. There is no clear evidence that the SCO was developed as a “strategic counterweight” to NATO and, indeed, some Western scholars have encouraged greater collaboration between NATO and the SCO. As Julie Boland points out, NATO members have already carried out joint exercises with SCO states, in pursuit of joint gains in areas such as counter-terrorism and combating narcotics flows. However, NATO’s role in these endeavors appears to be minimal, with the SCO serving as the primary new security institution in the region [70].

Its role in the SCO illustrates that China may pursue a revisionist multilateral strategy by working around, rather than directly undermining, the existing order. The progress of the SCO in the past 10 years cannot be labeled as “assertive,” in the sense that it has not sought to undermine or replace NATO or other existing collective security bodies. Yet a key precondition was that there was political space available for China and its partners to develop the organization. Circumvention, as suggested, tends to be selected when the political costs vis-à-vis the U.S. and other major powers are not particularly high.

Shaping

In addition to circumvention, China may seek to respond to institutional constraints by seeking to modify the procedures and authority structures that underpin existing regimes and institutions. Shaping, though, is more assertive in nature because it involves a direct challenge to the constitutive elements of existing institutions. From an empirical point of view, it is relatively difficult to observe examples of shaping, since China has an incentive not to appear to be reconstituting or changing institutions to better serve its own interests. However, one example that does fit into this category concerns China’s involvement in the G20 and with the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) alignment.

After the Second World War, the international economic and financial order has been largely based on the Bretton Woods system (i.e., IMF and World Bank) and led by a group of industrial countries (i.e., the G7) to serve their interests. To many

developing countries, such an international order is unfair and unjust. China, having long called for establishing a new international political and economic order, has gradually realized the best strategy for realizing this goal is to engage with the big industrial powers and to reform the international order from within. China's behavior in the G20 can usefully illustrate what we term a "shaping" strategy in multilateral diplomacy.

Through the 1990s, China was reluctant to be explicitly associated with the G7 for at least two reasons. One reason is that China saw the G7 as a "club of the rich" that does not fit with China's self-styled identity of a "developing country." The other is that China did not want to be treated as a second-class member like Russia, and therefore have only limited influence on the international economic affairs within the Group.⁴⁷ Therefore, the establishment of the G20 in 1999 was perceived as "a timely gift for the Chinese government" because, through it, China would be able to engage closely with G8 without being a part of it for the time being [71].

Although the G20 was initially created as "an informal mechanism for dialogue among systemically important countries within the framework of the Bretton Woods institutional system" and was mainly a dialogue platform for the finance ministers and central bankers of the member countries, China has actively participated in most of the G20 meetings, perceiving that the G20 signifies "the growing importance of emerging economic powers and reflects the changing economic power balance between developed nations and the newly emerging powers".⁴⁸ As the G20 has a wider representation than the G8, and includes some important developing countries like India and Brazil, China's strategy seems to establish a coalition within the G20 and seek opportunities to push for reforms within the Group. For this purpose, China has particularly worked with Brazil, Russia, and India (together with China as the BRICs).

The acronym "BRICs" was coined by Goldman Sachs to represent the four emerging economies that together could overtake the combined GDP of the G7 by 2035.⁴⁹ In the wake of 2008 global financial crisis, the BRICs held their first Financial Ministers Meeting to coordinate their stances on the eve of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting on November 7.⁵⁰ At the following G20 Washington Summit, held on 14–15 November 2008, the BRICs succeeded in pressuring the G20 to amend its initial draft of the communiqué to state that the emerging and developing countries "should have a greater voice and representation" [72]. In addition, the BRICs called for the expansion of the Financial Stability Forum (FSF), an international institution founded in 1999 to promote international financial stability and its membership include a dozen of industrialized countries. The BRICs succeeded again at the G20 London Summit held on 2 April 2009 as the G20 agreed

⁴⁷ Chufang Lin, "Zhongguo yu Baguo Jituan you yue" ("China and the G8 have an Appointment"), *Nanfang Zhoumo* (Southern Weekend), May 15, 2003. Available at: <http://www.southcn.com/weekend/comment/200305150014.htm>

⁴⁸ Mingjiang Li, "Rising from Within: China's Search for a Multilateral World and its Implications for Sino-U.S. Relations", RSIS Working Paper No. 225, 2011.

⁴⁹ Jim O'Neill, "Building Better Global Economic BRICs," Global Economics Paper No. 66, Goldman Sachs, 2001. Dominic Wilson and Roopa Purushothaman, "Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050," Global Economics Paper No. 99, Goldman Sachs, 2003.

⁵⁰ See: Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation, "BRIC Finance Ministers Communique," August 11, 2008, available at: <http://www.minfin.ru/en/news/index.php?id4=6765>

to set up a new Financial Stability Board as successor of the FSF to include all G20 countries.

Encouraged by the fruit of their cooperation and with a desire for strengthening their influences, on June 16, 2009, the leaders of the BRIC countries held their first official summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia, and issued a declaration calling for a “more diversified international monetary system” and the establishment of a multi-polar world order. In response, US Secretary of State Clinton, in a major foreign policy address, not only signaled a continuing commitment to making the international order more inclusive, but also repeated ideas proposed by the BRIC communiqué. In the following G20 Pittsburgh Summit held on 24–25 September 2009, the BRICs succeeded in persuading the G7 leaders to agree to elevate the G20 as the “the premier forum” for global economic coordination, which was seen as “a seminal step toward truly global economic governance”.⁵¹ Another victory BRIC won during the Pittsburgh Summit was political support for their demand for a shift in country representation at the IMF of at least five percent toward dynamic emerging market and developing countries,⁵² from which China would benefit the most. Specifically, the PRC’s own voting share within the IMF would increase from 2.77 % to 4.42 %, making it the third most influential country in the organization, behind the U.S. and Japan. Hence, through the G20 mechanism, China has successfully sought to shape the underlying rules of the international financial system.

Despite its success in the G20, a caveat in this example is that China was limited by the desire not to adopt an overly confrontational posture with respect to the U.S.⁵³ For instance, prior to the G20 London Summit, both Russia and China called for replacing the US Dollar as the global reserve currency, and China’s Central Bank Governor Zhou Xiaochuan even identified IMF special drawing rights as a potential future substitute. US President Obama quickly responded, claiming there was no need for a new global currency. Having realized the deleterious impact of such a provocative position, China started to slowly back down. It did not specifically raise the reserve currency issue at the following G20 Summit in April and “did not echo Russian and Brazilian calls for the BRIC powers to try to loosen the grip of the dollar on the world financial system.” Due to China’s effort, the final communiqué of the first BRIC Summit did not mention the creation of a supranational reserve currency to dilute the dominance of the US dollar, an idea Russia had promoted heavily.⁵⁴ Indeed, in 2009, China’s Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei explicitly announced that the replacement of the dollar was “now a discussion among academics” and “not the position of the Chinese government”.⁵⁵ Even when adopting a shaping strategy, then, China has proceeded carefully, with an eye to balancing the need for reform with the desire not to damage relations with the other major powers.

⁵¹ Jacob Funk Kirkegaard, “Europe’s Role in Global Economic Governance”, East Asian Forum, 26 July 2011, available at: <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/07/26/europes-role-in-global-economic-governance/>

⁵² See: “G-20 Backs Sustained Crisis Response, Shift in IMF Representation”, IMF Survey online, September 25, 2009, available at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2009/NEW092509A.htm>.

⁵³ Glosny, “China and the BRICs,” 114.

⁵⁴ See: Chris Buckley, “Much-Trumpeted BRIC Summit Ends Quiet!”, *Reuters*, June 17, 2009, available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/06/17/us-bric-summit-idUSTR55G20B20090617>.

⁵⁵ See: “China Reassures on Dollar Debate before G8,” *China Daily*, July 6, 2009, available at: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-07/06/content_8381924.htm.

In sum, these cases illustrate the diversity in China's multilateralism. Rather than abiding by just one approach, the PRC has shifted across time (for instance, by moving from a "watching" to an "engaging" strategy in the UNSC) and pursued different paths across regime, as witnessed in its active engagement within the UNHRC versus its circumvention of the OECD's DAC, or its shaping of a new security architecture in Central Asia via the SCO. Just as China's reform process has been guided by an adaptive, trial-and-error mindset, we see the same pragmatism reflected in its foreign relations. Figure 2 offers a summary of the cases as they correspond to the four strategic choices described in the previous section.

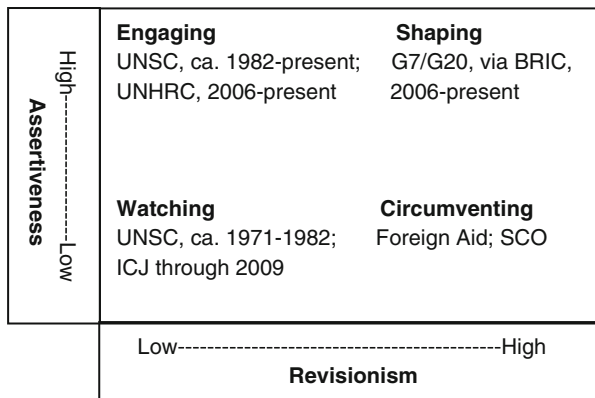
Conclusion

In this article, we argued that China's multilateral behavior cannot be characterized as either fundamentally "status-quo"- or "revisionist" in nature. This framework misses an important behavioral dimension, which is assertiveness. When we overlay revisionism with assertiveness, we can discern four basic multilateral strategies: watching, which is a passive, status-quo-oriented posture; engaging, which is an assertive, but still status-quo-oriented posture; circumventing, which is revisionist, but relatively unassertive; and shaping, which is both revisionist and assertive in nature. We provided illustrations of each strategy across a range of economic and security institutions, demonstrating that China's multilateralism is much more diverse and context-dependent than previous discussions have allowed.

Based on this argument, how might China's multilateralism evolve in the coming years? Our prediction is that three strategies—watching, circumventing, and shaping—will continue to face major constraints, and that China's multilateral diplomacy will tend towards an assertive, but still status-quo-oriented approach.

First, the strategy of "watching" is likely to be selected with decreasing frequency. The reason is that, as China gains experience, better understand how its interests intersect with the opportunities provided by existing institutions, and as the scope of its interests widens and deepens, simply observing from the sidelines will no longer be an attractive option across the range of institutions. We observed this tendency

Fig. 2 China's diverse multilateralism: illustrations



with respect to the UNSC, but the same might also be said of China's interactions with ASEAN, which have progressed from passive, to active, in the sense of broader consultations over regional economic and security issues.⁵⁶ This implies that the socialization processes described by Johnston, which assume that the state in question is a newcomer, will be constrained.⁵⁷ In other words, China's growing maturity in the international system will become another element in the "limits of socialization" in China's multilateralism identified by Hongying Wang.⁵⁸

Turning to revisionist strategies, we first need to consider the possibility of "circumvention." Although China may seek to work around existing bodies, this is likely to be a strategy utilized in only a small set of cases. The reason is that, though not assertive in the traditional sense, circumvention may still be perceived as a nascent challenge to the current order, inviting a potential backlash. The SCO, for instance, has been considered by some as a potential strategic check on U.S. influence in Central Asia, even if it is not in direct conflict with U.S. or NATO forces. Nevertheless, one area in which we may see growing circumvention is in terms of China's multilateral diplomacy with regional institutions in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. The joint articulation of development, foreign aid and other principles that do not follow Western norms (e.g. those that validate authoritarian governance) is a case in point, despite potential limitations, such as the engendering of negative popular attitudes towards China in these regions.⁵⁹

With respect to "shaping," an argument might be made that, as the PRC gains power and confidence, it will be tempted more actively to shape existing institutions, as well as challenge the norms and authority structures on which those bodies are based. This appeared to be the case with respect to China's behavior vis-à-vis the G7. Indeed, two routes to a "shaping" strategy can be conceived (see Fig. 3). The first begins with "watching," which is a passive, non-revisionist approach. It proceeds through engagement, as illustrated in our review of China's evolution in the UN, but then shifts towards revisionism, culminating in a "shaping" strategy. The second begins with circumvention, as exemplified by China's role in the SCO, but then proceeds towards a more confrontational posture vis-à-vis existing institutions.

Nevertheless, we are skeptical that "shaping" will be an inevitable result of China's multilateral diplomacy. "Shaping" is not primed to emerge as a natural progression from either engaging or circumventing, given the high political risks of seeking to rework the power structures and normative bases of existing regimes and institutions,

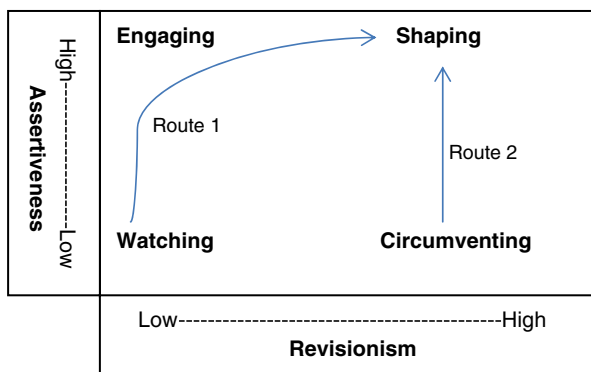
⁵⁶ See: David Arase [73] and Mikael Weissmann [74].

⁵⁷ A recent example of the potential efficacy of social influence on China concerned its shifting position on the question of implementing a UN peacekeeping operation in Darfur. China arguably played an active role in urging the Khartoum government to approve the UN mission only after it had come under pressure from other states and actors, and yielded to protect its reputation as a "responsible stakeholder" in advance of the 2008 Olympics. Jonathan Holslag [75].

⁵⁸ See n19 above.

⁵⁹ See: Joshua Cooper Ramo [76]; Gu et al., "Global Governance and Developing Countries," 274–292; and Wang Guangqian, "Zhongguo jueqi: 'Beijing Gongshi' yu 'Beijing Moshi,'" (The Rise of China: "Beijing Consensus" and "China Model."), *Caimao Jingji [Finance and Trade Economics]* 2 (2008). Note that Chinese officials, thus far, have demurred from advancing the "Beijing Consensus" as an alternative to Western prescriptions for economic growth.

Fig. 3 Pathways to shaping



as well as the prospects of sacrificing the continuing stream of benefits offered by working within the existing order. However, there are voices in the West, including Gordon Brown, that recognize that a reordering of the rules of authority within global governance institutions is inevitable if such bodies are to remain relevant, given the ongoing shift in power to states such as China, India, Russia and Brazil.⁶⁰ Hence, China may be able to successfully shape the rules of bodies such as the G20 or the UN Security Council, but only when there is a broad political consensus that doing so serves the interests not only of China, but also of the international community at large.

Given the limitations on alternative approaches, China's preferred approach across issues will likely to be an "engaging" strategy; that is, a posture that is assertive, but not fundamentally revisionist. The result of this will be advantageous to the international community insofar as China's positions can be reconciled with those of other states. Indeed, there may be collective gains in areas ranging from counter-terrorism activities to peacekeeping, to efforts to alleviate the debt crises in Europe and the U.S. On the other hand, conflicting interests will result in a more complex negotiating environment, as evidenced by hard bargaining at the 2009 Copenhagen climate change conference and on multilateral efforts to address the problems of nuclear weapons development in Iran and North Korea.⁶¹ We expect China to use its growing leverage to protect its interests, as illustrated by the UNHRC and UNSC cases, an inevitable result of which will be fewer diplomatic successes for the U.S. and its allies. China's interlocutors will have to adjust their expectations and accommodate a state that is both able and willing to protect its interests.⁶² Attempting to prevent China from accomplishing its major national goals will be self-defeating for the West, as doing so will only lead the PRC to look more favorably on more clearly revisionist strategies—a result much more damaging to the existing order than contention within existing institutions.

⁶⁰ See, e.g., Speech by Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, at the Confederation of Indian Industry, Bangalore, January 17, 2007, available at: <http://ukingermany.fco.gov.uk/en/news/?view=Speech&id=4616109>.

⁶¹ For a discussion, see: Joel Wuthnow [77].

⁶² This perspective, which is that China will become more assertive as its interests dictate, is commensurate with what David Shambaugh terms the "selective engagement" school within the Chinese strategic studies community. Shambaugh, "Coping with a Conflicted China," 17–20.

Acknowledgments Xin Li thanks the Danish EAC Foundation for its financial support for his stay and research at Copenhagen Business School after his completion of PhD education.

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