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CHINA'S RISE: SHAPING A MULTIPOLAR WORLD THROUGH PEACEFUL ECONOMIC GROWTH

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ABSTRACT

China's unprecedented economic growth over the past few decades has been both rapid and transformative, positioning it as a key architect of a multipolar world order. Unlike traditional paths to global dominance often marked by military expansion, China has focused on peaceful strategies driven by economic policies, infrastructure development, and international cooperation. Through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has fostered connectivity and trade, enabling developing nations to integrate into the global economy while creating new markets for Chinese goods and investments. This economic diplomacy has allowed China to challenge the long-standing hegemony of Western nations, promoting an alternative vision of globalization that prioritizes inclusivity and mutual benefit. As the world witnesses a relative decline in unilateral dominance by any single superpower, China's strategic partnerships across Asia, Africa, and Latin America emphasize a shared approach to growth and development. China's peaceful rise, however, has not been without challenges. Critics argue that its economic dominance could lead to geopolitical tensions and dependencies among partner countries. Nevertheless, China's focus on innovation, green technologies, and digital transformation highlights its commitment to sustainable development. By recalibrating the balance of global power through economic means, China is enabling the emergence of a multipolar world where no single entity dictates international norms. This transition fosters a more diverse and balanced global order, reflecting the aspirations of various nations. As China continues to rise, the world faces opportunities for collaboration and challenges in managing this profound shift in international dynamics.

Keywords: China, economic growth, peaceful, multipolar world, global cooperation, power balance.

Introduction

The rise of China, often hailed as one of the most significant events in recent history, cannot be denied. Its economy, already the world's second-largest, is anticipated to surpass the United States' economy within the next decade. While

economic predictions warrant caution, numerous scholars have confidently concluded that no other nation will be able to catch up with China's GDP throughout the 21st century. This projection, if realized, could usher in an era of unprecedented hegemony - an amalgamation of economic, political, and military power, the likes of which have never been witnessed in modern global history. Nevertheless, this future scenario is subject to intense debate and skepticism, as many contemplate how international relations and the dynamics of global economics will transpire in the coming years. There are countless questions shrouding this topic, and the world eagerly awaits the novel developments that will unfold.

China's ascent on the world stage has had far-reaching implications, captivating the attention of nations across the globe. The profound impact of China's economic growth has sent ripples throughout the international community, triggering a plethora of discourse and analysis. It has become a focal point of discussions, with experts and policymakers examining its implications from various perspectives.

As China's economy continues to flourish, its potential to surpass the United States' economy looms on the horizon, stoking both excitement and apprehension. The sheer scale of China's economic might and its steady ascent have prompted scholars to project a future of unparalleled dominance. The emergence of a new world order, centered around China's prowess, presents a paradigm shift of immense proportions.

However, amidst the projections and conjectures, doubts and skepticism persist. The intricacies of global economics and the intricately woven fabric of international relations pose challenges to any definitive prediction. The web of interconnectedness that binds nations together adds layers of complexity to the unfolding narrative. Will China's rise translate into unchallenged power and influence? Or will the dynamics of a rapidly changing world disrupt this trajectory? These pressing questions ignite a fervor of anticipation, as the world eagerly awaits the unravelling of events. The coming years hold the promise of unveiling new developments and shedding light on the future trajectory of global affairs. Will China's economic juggernaut continue its ascent, drawing the world into an era marked by its unprecedented hegemony? Or will unforeseen circumstances reshape the landscape, altering the course of history in ways yet to be comprehended?

In this era characterized by uncertainty, one thing is certain: the path ahead is shrouded in intrigue, ripe with possibilities waiting to be realized. As nations navigate the intricate web of international relations and grapple with the complexities of economic interdependence, the course of history hangs in a delicate balance. The stage is set for a captivating saga, where the rise of China looms large, captivating our collective imagination and inciting a multitude of perspectives. The world is poised on the edge of transformation, eagerly bearing witness to the chapters that have yet to be written. (Scobell et al.2020)

Given its size and potential growth, China's internal policies and its external economic behavior are naturally a major focus of interest among governments, business enterprises, non-governmental organizations, and academics. There is a rich literature dealing with the technical and economic aspects of China's development and its influence on financial markets, commodity supplies, and their

prices. Equally, the unintended consequences of deepening economic reforms and the implications of China's integration within international economic law and global economic governance have been examined in some detail. Yet, despite a great deal of research aimed at understanding the relationship between China and the rest of the world, significant questions remain about the extent to which China wants to, can, and will change the existing economic and political structures. (Kroeber, 2020)

Background and Context

For millennia, the lands of the former Middle Kingdom comprised the geographic and cultural heart of the great civilization of China. The Middle Kingdom stood largely isolated from the rest of the world by geography and the barriers provided by human culture and local politics. From its capital at Xi'an, Beijing, Chang'an, and several other locations, it generally ruled its immediate neighbors. The ancient Chinese empire also periodically expanded, consolidated, and sometimes shattered. It was only with the European arrival in the Indo-Pacific after 1500 that the geographic assemblage of the long years of the Qing Dynasty finally gave way to a more Western construct. This longstanding dominance was due at least in part to the sheer scale of its population, which has owned the title of being the world's most populous country for some 2,000 years. (Cohen, 2023)

Historical Perspectives

Decades before Western importers experienced relative hardship, being forced to accept low-quality goods in exchange for increasingly costly bullion, the Chinese largely achieved economic autarky. Pervading economic thought was the tacit assumption that the level of economic welfare of a nation was directly related to the size of its inventory of monetary reserves. Noting that China was able to maintain its economic grandeur despite the persistent European and other import-export shortfalls and subsequently exemplify the emergence of the modern economic phenomenon, is one of the big debates of economic history, a debate which has profound implications for the present and the future, and to which we cannot see the answer.

Albeit in the initial phase, the near chaotic decline of the economic viability of the West and the continued trade surpluses of the Oriental region, evidenced by the rise in stockpiles of specie in China, occurred. The West then exerted a direct military influence on China under the pretext of seeking new markets for the eventual benefit of China. This is very similar to actions taken by the West after the conclusion of the Second World War. The eventual result of the phenomenon was well-established trade links encouraging those of China's confederates, who were also promoters of revenue-laden mercantile routes for world trade, ensuring stable tributary streams of precious treasure that added to the extensive grain bins, administrative defense expenditures, and Chinese exchange reserves. (Liu, 2022)

- **China's Economic Development in Ancient Times**

In contrast to modern economists' reliance on quantitative evidence-based research, China's authorities and statisticians at times over a period of two millennia doctored results with the intention of buttressing the ruler's prestige and authority through exaggerated census data. Nevertheless, Chinese records contain copious enumerations for the ancient periods, and modern analysts rely on contemporary cross-checks, using patterns of technological processes of which the center keeps changing. Based upon such evidence, it is fairly certain that

quantitative economic output in China excelled, relative to the rest of the world, for most of antiquity up to and through the first millennium. In the last 700 years before the Common Era, the cultivable area in China increased at a modest pace, at about 100 to 400 square miles per year, while land under the plough and in mulberry plantations passed 25 million square miles in the ninth century, with an average of 10 arable acres assigned to each inhabitant.

Pages and numbers connected with relevant statistics, elevating Chinese output, also dwell on the early discovery in China of such crucial inventions as paper, printing, and the compass, as well as the use of gunpowder in both astronomy and agriculture. These accounts suggest close links between long-run economic advances in technology, demographic growth, and improved living standards. Owing to the size of the country, China supported an extremely large human population. After converting ancient Chinese accounts to metric values, estimates an equicohort of 1,200 million for the year 1000 based on a sophisticated age-sex distribution methodology. Even where the rest of the world still lagged far behind, however, demographers discerned some 600 million living on the territory of present-day China by 1000, or 40 percent of the global population. They saw China's share of world population dropping to somewhat less than 30 percent or 460 million by 1600, then to 24 percent or 580 million by 1800, and finally to less than 9 percent or 430 million by 1930. (Yang et al.2022)

- **The Opium Wars and Colonialism**

The first event that caused China to fall behind was the increase of opium imports. While outwardly China's economy seemed to be growing, the events of the 18th and 19th centuries led to the subjugation of China to European economic interests. When silver reserves, which had been built over a long period, depleted, Emperor Yong Le ordered a ban on foreign trade. Westerners still wanted silk, tea, and other Chinese goods, so they looked for a product to induce the Chinese to want the important things of their culture, which was tea. In the 19th century, the British East India Company, needing to maintain a balance of trade, began growing opium in India and encouraging imports into China. (Sharma, 2024)

The Emperor issued a series of edicts outlawing the importation, sale, and use of opium. Smuggling increased, and the situation grew more critical. Eventually, British soldiers began smuggling opium into China. When the authorities found out and tried to arrest the soldiers, battles broke out, beginning the first Opium War. Peace came only after Britain forced China to sign an unfavorable treaty in 1814. The British government, however, wanted more, and when an edict prohibiting all opium was issued in 1834, they saw it as an opportunity for war and dispatched opium smugglers to China, escorted by warships. Following the second war, signed mostly to humiliate China, the British forced a treaty that gave Britain trading rights and ports, including Hong Kong, as British territory. To support their trade, the British and other European powers were granted extraterritorial rights, and later the United States and other countries were granted Most Favored Nation status.

Economic Reforms and Opening Up

Fifty years ago, when China launched its reform and opening-up policy, it started at a very low base — extremely low incomes and wealth. Therefore, the Chinese people would benefit enormously by simply drawing on and absorbing new surplus knowledge, skills, and wealth that was created largely outside of China. Because

China and the Chinese generally viewed things in economic and utilitarian terms, confronting and absorbing surplus should be viewed as almost purely win-win features of China's development. Many people ignore the fact that the total size of the global economy is value creation and, therefore, the total wealth of the global economy presents great win-win features for all members of the global community. China's peaceful rise is, after all, a win-win feature of the global economy. (Xie, 2020)

In November 1978, it was Liu Shaoqi, then Party General Secretary, who convened a central committee meeting that called the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to make a decision to launch a comprehensive policy that would reform the economy and open up to connect with surplus created outside and inside China. The Chinese Communist Party made the decision to catch up in development with the more civilized developed countries, of which the United States is the model (Livingston, 2022). That motivating sentiment points to a policy of clinging to the coattails of the United States, which had reached the top as the global leader by promoting the growth of Lincoln's political economy of effective utilization of what is produced by a free market economy, which Lincoln saw as not just a few accumulative free market capitalists, but a vibrant middle class. China's comprehensive connection policy, encompassing a policy to draw economic lessons from policies and the adoption of an economic model like that of the United States, requires that China ask Americans how, in actual real time, they successfully adhered to and enforced Lincoln's political economy in human engineering. Prime such examples are found in Alexander Hamilton, the most accomplished Secretary of the United States Treasury, in the Taft-Knox and Roosevelt presidential administrations, building upon Hamilton's problems and solutions in the Jane Addams Hull House years. With intensive consultation in person, the Chinese and other visitors to the Science of Society, for example, can change the meaning of a guiding economic and social science mission orientation to 'Lincoln people's personal economics'.

- **Deng Xiaoping's Reforms**

Deng Xiaoping, China's paramount leader from 1977 until 1992, played a major role in China's unprecedented economic development. Deng formulated and implemented the Open Door Policy, in which China made significant trade concessions in order to maximize foreign investment. The same principles ranked select economic development regions, in which foreign investors could exercise considerable leniency in the running of their enterprises. The opening of China through the PRC's export-centric planned economic development model contributed to a substantial increase in foreign exchange reserves and foreign investment in China. China's accumulation of foreign exchange reserves had an increasing effect on the U.S. trade deficit, with China in the 1990s increasingly becoming a significant exporter of consumer electronics and textiles. From a small base of foreign direct investment in the 1980s, China became the third-largest recipient of foreign direct investment two decades later. Other economic consequences of the Open Door Policy included, among others, the increase of foreign-invested manufacturing companies in the country, the development of the largest labor force in the world, as well as the development of the world's second-largest economy, lagging significantly behind the United States in terms of PPP. (Riela, 2023)

- **Special Economic Zones**

In September 1980, China's leaders, believing that their experiments in economic reform had been sufficiently successful, decided to open the door to the world economy. China's first "Special Zones" were established in January 1981, at the southernmost border of China. With completely different tax, tariff, land, exports, imports, and labor regulations, duty-free incentives for investment and other agreed conditions, these special zones firmly and effectively attracted the attention of China's leaders and indeed the attention of the entire world. Thanks to these zones, China's economy as well as China's society changed significantly in the 1980s. Over the decade of the 1990s, these powers were sufficiently grounded that China was described as the one "Silver Bright Spot in the short-term forecast for growth of all the Group of Seven countries and other developing countries." In addition to these special zones, quite a number of special ports, special wharfs, special activity products, and other special achievements have emerged since those first three special zones. In November 1998, the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, just on its own, exported 2.5 times more goods than in January 1981; its foreign tourist departure volume is ten times what it was in 1990. (Akuandna, 2023)

Belt and Road Initiative

In September 2013, Xi Jinping announced the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, creating an open and inclusive economic pattern that can be strengthened through cooperation on the ground. There are three main directions for infrastructure construction – the New Eurasian Land Bridge, China-Mongolia-Russia Corridor, and China-Central Asia-West Asia Corridor (Freyman, 2022). The corridor will complement and enhance the Southwestern Silk Road Economic Belt, the Pakistan Economic Corridor, the BCIM economic corridor, and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. It will cover more than 60 countries, represent two-thirds of the global population, and account for half the world's GDP and total trade volume. Construction has already begun and it is progressing from the Asian interior toward European sea and land channels, spreading in all directions including South Asia, West Asia, and the Pacific, and including Africa and parts of Latin America. The specific effect will gradually become apparent.

The idea of the Belt and Road combines the spirit of the ancient Silk Road with modern economic cooperation. It focuses on the principle of policy consultation, openness, and mutual administration, making common rules and building benefits for all. In terms of policy consultation and planning cooperation, the existing cooperation frameworks will be integrated, and communication and coordination regarding infrastructure have already been underway. In the context of economic trade and resource allocation, the effective internal markets surrounding the Silk Road will import goods and services from the world, including those from economically competitive developed countries. Concerning communication and cooperation, building the infrastructure that is the foundation of development will influence transportation, electricity, telecommunications, energy, fossil energy, business, water supply and drainage, ecological construction, and other areas. The experiences and challenges encountered in economic restructuring will also influence these directions for infrastructure.

The Belt and Road initiatives are an open concept, flexible in terms of route. The overland section that connects other areas of the world to the Sea Silk Road will

depend on various countries' cooperation and input value creation (Uygun & Ahsan, 2021). The road section will consist of joint management requirements that are sensitive to startups in order to keep costs low. The development of free trade zones has an important strategic complement to the construction of the initiative. Also, the Belt and Road initiatives involve both political will as well as a joint plan of action. In the coming year, outward self-promotion of Belt and Road cooperation will play an increasingly important role. The media will also continue to campaign in collaboration and highlight even more the interdependence aspect of the global value chain. The coming year will be focused on industrial style and political coordination. Banks are likely to decisively challenge existing financial institutions in providing infrastructure loans and investments. They will push more outward, although they will go about deploying funds differently by challenging creditors with an immersive number of financing initiatives.

- **Origins and Goals**

Since 1978, China's policies have been based on an explicit long-term vision and set of goals to shape an alternative direction of evolution of the state system in the 21st century. This articulation of long-term goals reduces uncertainties about its behavior and reiterates the vital importance of today's great power political cooperation. Moreover, continuing to succeed with its present policies, China is transforming the international distribution of power to make it increasingly unrealistic for humanity to act on the basic assumption that the distribution of capabilities of states in the international political system will continue to be heavily skewed by only two great powers. (Zheng & Kapoor, 2021)

China's fundamental strategic goal is to generate and maintain a secure external environment that is internationally benign, enabling China to develop as a modern, economically prosperous, strong nation by any standard, one that is world-class in every technological, military, and political field and superior to any great power that might challenge its national sovereignty or stability. This will be done through: (1) a relentless pursuit of peace over the coming years, thereby attracting the investment, industrial base, and modern technology needed to accelerate its economic growth while also developing a forward military capacity to deter or defeat military threats from other great powers; (2) ensuring access to the energy, minerals, and resources required to feed its accelerating economy by increasing its global stake in their flow over the coming years; (3) attempting to shape the direction of the policies of the international community in a more benign direction that benefits all. At this stage in China's peaceful developmental strategy, national policies are consistent with those adopted in its earliest years drawing near the final quarter of the 20th century, seeking to develop resources through scientific, technological, and advanced industrial means with the objective of constantly improving and enhancing national strength in the quest for modernity. (Goldstein, 2020)

- **Criticism and Controversies**

Like any state facing significant deployment and consolidation of power, China's economic miracle is not without controversy or criticism. These controversies, centered around the fear of China's regional and global intentions, could result in China's military shift, hampering the peaceful rise scenario and leading the country to join and compete in a coming multipolar world through military conflict and power-assertive strategies. The current trend between developing prosperity,

enlightening political behavior, and international peace in China is simply an inferred correlation. Somewhat speculative, all studies assume that when the Chinese recognize their country will continue in peaceful development and prosperity, it will reinforce feelings of national self-interest in perpetuating this peaceful development and maintaining the country's current internal and external status quo. (Whyte, 2021)

The time has come for a general argument that uses China's history, the theoretical foundations of 20th-century geo-economics, the specifics of China's governing strategy, concerns about non-democratic goals, and the debate about the Law of Nations in constructing an inductive realpolitik theory that proves that "peaceful rise" might not lead to an eventual cessation of peaceful policy. This correlation is made up of "two tracks" of military accumulation and peace strategies and therefore is not confronted in the same specific ways (Sticher, 2022). It is important then to realize that China is only interested in economic disparity, as long as the internal socio-economic disparities and wealth creation do not impede the political regime's continuous existence.

China's Global Economic Impact

China's global economic impact is increasingly prominent for a simple numerical reason: it emerges simply from size. China has almost one-fifth of the world's population. Its economy is the second largest. Its annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth is often in double digits. The combination of sheer size, dynamism, and speed of development is therefore already unprecedented in recent world economic history. (Mao et al.2020)

But the point here is not only about size. It is also about the underlying quality of what is happening. Public infrastructure in roads, railways, ports, airports, and telecommunications is being built on a grand scale that is self-evidently advantageous to many other countries that live closer to China than the People's Republic does to the other existing large, advanced industrial powers (Lebrouhi et al.2021). China's colossal cheap labor force, range of economic activity, as well as savings and huge direct merchandise investment flow abroad have given it a multiplicity of personalities within global economic relations. Its remarkable export success in labor-intensive activities appears to be leaving an especially strong imprint on the rest of Asia and Latin America, given the large associated percentage increases in imports that other countries in these two regions are experiencing. On one level, the experience of East Asia in the preceding three decades serves as a telling precedent. But the range of interest in China is wider and deeper, if only because China is already larger, and its sustainable long-term per capita growth prospects are more forthcoming.

- **Trade Relations with the US**

China's trade record with America is less impressive than its performance with Japan or the EU, but still constitutes a remarkable growth story. As late as 1990, almost all of China's trade was with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: the US and China barely had any trade. By the end of the decade, American media were filled with horror stories about the possibility of insourcing Chinese agriculture. Over the next decade and a half, America would become China's largest trading partner in goods. While America's trade with China is one of the US's fastest growing trade relationships in history - in 1985, it imported about \$1.5 billion worth of Chinese goods, or \$2 billion in today's dollars (Bown, 2021). As Chinese

nominal incomes rise, the demand and trade of services - in tourism, education, and transportation-related services, but also selected trade in financial services - is also surging. America, for example, is now the largest international customer of Chinese airlines, significantly more popular than China's current second largest trading partner, the EU.

While the trade in goods between the US and China is immense in the absolute sense, it is enormous relative to the economies of both countries. For China, the American market is its largest single country market. In 2006, exports to the US equaled 19.4% of its overall exports and would be even higher if service trade were included. For the US, in 2006, imports from China equaled 4.1% of GDP. In services trade, the ratio is even higher: service imports from China equaled 0.5% of total US GDP. (Yu et al., 2024)

- **Investment in Africa**

Investments in developing economies are well within China's current capabilities as well. Already, we see massive increases in aid to Africa and investment in several other developing economies. The "going out" policy is an attempt to diversify the industrial structure and escape from the monopoly of mature developed economies. If China's demand drives Africa to further integration into the international division of labor, the gains for China might be large. An emphasis on technology and knowledge transition would be a very wise thing to consider when planning a policy. Yet it would be foolish to think that these policies on their own will keep China in an environment that it finds safe and secure. Military power, then, will always be a necessary part to secure power gains in the future. In Africa, China has been present since the late 1950s, yet it is only recently that the trading relationship has started to boom. Africa is not yet integrated into the world market, so even if China is the world's largest trading nation in merchandise trade, foreign investment, and population, sub-Saharan Africa would still argue that there is no systemic error if Africa is now strongly connected with it. China-Africa trade in 2007 was officially 58.8 billion U.S. dollars, growing leaps and bounds by about 40 percent as the Chinese economy has boomed (Ryan, 2024). Forty percent of China's crude oil imports came from Africa, mainly from Angola and Sudan. China also provides military and financial assistance to the countries of Africa, mainly for political and diplomatic reasons.

6. Technological Innovation

Technological innovation will remain one of China's key focuses in the short to medium term. The scale of the challenge is vast and the associated costs are huge. China wants to provide the basic needs of urban infrastructure, good living standards, education, and welfare without causing environmental disasters. In recent years, technology and innovation have become increasingly important in China. Policy has been developed to foster technological innovation, resulting in major advances in science. As a result, China is gaining international recognition for its achievements across the full spectrum of raw science and technology through advanced research.

The growing capability and confidence of an innovation-oriented China are significant because they demonstrate that China will soon be in the top layer of the technology hierarchy. Together, these advanced technologies promote the establishment of indigenous technological innovation systems in China. They give Chinese society the tools needed to move toward technological leadership. Today's

China is seen as a clear follower, but the gap is closing. China's emerging position does not permit its classification into the category of 'technology leader,' but it does permit China to promote the use of leading technologies. With multinational corporations still dominating the innovation and development processes, their interest in protecting their dominant positions through technology rule-making represents a systemic structural measure aimed at slowing China's rise on the innovation ladder. (Lundvall & Rikap, 2022)

- **Artificial Intelligence and Big Data**

From the perspective of sustainable societal innovation, we should adapt innovative technologies to existing societal infrastructure and systems and recognize the risks of innovation. We refer to the passive use of innovative technology in adaptations to existing societal infrastructure and the positive or negative side effects, as well as the potential derivative risks within existing social relations generated by innovative technology. In recent years, the exploratory stakeholders of innovative technology have significantly shifted from nerds to big business, meaning that profitability has gradually replaced the impact of technology discovery as the leading motivation. The commercial organizations in the industry will naturally sprint to the endpoint of technology development. But for commercial organizations, failure is always an option. (Kosterich, 2020)

In a previous scenario, the intersection of the technology development pathway and procedural ideology involving the rise of advanced artificial intelligence during wartime only pointed to a war with exponentially increasing attrition costs that jeopardized all of civilization. In addition, great thoughts by necessary predecessors were, in fact, not concerned about and could not offer a roadmap for the great devaluation, as AI and big data would have caused the significant automated expropriation of labor value from which wealth might accumulate. With automatic capitalism and unlimited means of bodily and moral exertion, machines might exploit their trans-hominid communication grid across the domains of work, education, and social media and counter the uncontrollable servility of their irrational biological masters.

Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy

In the era of globalization, a country's international status and influence increasingly depend on the status of its culture, as well as on its overall national strength. At present, culture has risen as the third power aside from military and economic power. Soft power inheres in the fact that others admire or emulate you, not that they fear stems from threats or bribes you can afford to do. Therefore, soft power is also called attractive power or beautiful power. From the viewpoint of cultural export, culture is a kind of sophisticated luxury that beats many other commodities. The export of a country's culture through movies, music, books, cuisine, and customs actually attracts much more attention from the masses and thereby conveys hidden diplomatic meaning than does official ideology broadcast by conventional government channels. The significance and effect of soft power is even more than what we can now imagine. Especially after the powerful rise of the United States and the popularization of Western culture, the international status and influence of the world superpower and the Western countries are not based on war cries, but transferred by soft power, by its own cultural products and by the layout and deployment of the decade-long cultural market. (Miller, 2021)

The lack of a good social image and cultural soft power has been a point of complaint for many years, a major 'bottleneck' affecting the overall build of the soft environment and the overall competitive capability. Constructing a good image and a good culture that show the national intention, dedication, sincerity, humility, all-sidedness, and fitness also means sharing civilization resources to raise capability. After the return of Hong Kong and Macao and the success of the Olympic Games and the Expo, China's economic and comprehensive power has made a big breakthrough, and the country has made outstanding achievements (He et al.2022). Meanwhile, the international power of culture and the recognition and acceptance of Chinese culture have been greatly increased. The wealth, power, and soft power of China's socialist culture have attracted people to pay much attention to savoring the charm of the colorful national culture, and have proposed more opinions and proposals on building a good national image and enhancing cultural confidence, spreading the China story and telling the grace of Chinese culture to the world. Under rapid economic development, the unique, attractive, and ethical aspects of China have greatly enhanced the international status and influence of China in science and technology, military, economy, politics, and culture, establishing a comparison with the multipolar shape of the world. It can therefore be said that cultural and ecological parks, as branded cultural creations that carry national histories and traditions, human dreams and souls, typical phenomena, and cultural rudiments, are great carriers of the economic and cultural image of the overall national power that are suitable for sharing by all of humanity.

- **Confucius Institutes**

So successful has been the rapid expansion of the university-based network of Confucius Institutes that from nothing in 2004, by 2007 they matched in numbers the twenty-two-year-old network of institutes in France, at sixty-three in number. Populated with Chinese teachers and Chinese currency, the institutes essentially provide soft power in order to curry favor in many major centers around the world for Chinese politics through language and cultural training (Lien et al., 2022). Connected with foreign universities that rely on Chinese students studying in China or who allegedly receive bribes to admit slow children, the Chinese government has numerous leverage points across a multiplex network that goes right to the heart of Western society. Additionally, there is really no question that the Confucius Institutes have a function other than the teaching of Chinese language and culture. There is no need for forty-nine of the sixty-three locations to engage with the USA, as Missouri's American Association of University Professors President has argued. From a Chinese point of view, that's cold turkey and it's setting the agenda to boot. The United States, once the need to learn about Chinese culture has been established, loses the right to conscript civil rights experts as a customer. Chinese understandings of human rights, the role of law, freedom of speech, and media responsibility can abruptly come to be regarded with equivalence. The Confucius Institutes provide a powerful exercise in image management.

China's Role in International Organizations

China's role in the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other international organizations has established it as a critical player in the rules-based international economic system that emerged in the mid-20th century. On the eve of the World Trade Organization's establishment in 1995, its GDP ranked 7th in

the world. By 2016, it ranked 1st. (Sasongko et al.2021) Though China ranks 106th in total exports per capita, it becomes much more significant economically when we consider China's large population. Rising from the eleventh to seventh largest economy by total GDP in 2014, lifting millions from poverty in the process, China's trading, investment, and financing ties increasingly bind the world. (Jenkins, 2022)(Stallings, 2020)

While China's increasing role and influence in international economic forums stem largely from its global economic impact, China has not refrained from seeking greater influence through the direct involvement of its citizens or entities with the organizations' rules and arrangements. Therefore, countries where China has outsized influence can benefit from helping China focus on areas where it can contribute to greater global economic welfare, such as the promotion of peaceful relations among nations, and from helping China make international economic and financial contributions where such contributions are not mutually beneficial. (Sutter, 2020)

- **United Nations**

Perhaps the most frequently expressed suggestion is an increase in the country's representation in multilateral organizations, especially the UNSC. The focus here has been largely on achieving permanent or semi-permanent seat status, which would shift the council's weighting in favor of the world's most populous state. Apart from creating more of a balance with the rest of the world, in the Western world, China has joined with the central clique in the council, paramount. A permanent seat would also be a badge of pride similar to those worn by the United States and the then Soviet Union. The argument that China deserves such recognition is largely on account of its economic strength, being humanity's most populous nation and one of the world's oldest continuous civilizations (Wright, 2020). With around one-fifth of the world's population, it seems anomalous that so many Chinese and their government should be indirectly represented at this vital nodal point for the governance of the international community from linguistic, cultural, historical, and democratic perspectives (Mao et al.2020). In much European Union and U.S. debate, it is also argued that China's presence and participation in peacekeeping operations lacks the authority of the veto with other council members, including on occasions third-party interference from other nations. Only its financial, diplomatic, and strategic importance is recognized. Indeed, as the country with the largest population and a permanent place among significant global groups, it is suggested that China should also have a permanent seat on what may become a reformed UNSC. This chapter will examine China's 'peaceful rise' and governance. However, first, it is useful to explore the extent to which China has managed to revise some key elements of global governance to such an extent or even other international organizations, and other 'emerging powers' today under the anachronistic norms of the Westphalian system. Furthermore, to what extent do China's bargaining strategies and domestic factors explain China's veto of UNSC resolutions and the management of numerous military, political, and social problems associated with peacekeeping operations? While in many instances China's governance is improving, given the global infrastructure's significant states' *raison d'être*, the extent of the concession and effectiveness of influence seems under-recognized. The challenge is not to

maintain obsolete precepts, but to encourage a greater degree of enlightened self-interest and adaptive multilateralism from China and other rising states.

Military Modernization

In its national defense legislation, China clearly defines its national defense policy as defensive in nature. China maintains that a more developed China will not threaten the security of any other country; rather, it will create important opportunities for other countries with its growth. But China's security and development do face challenges. China's armed forces must strengthen themselves through military modernization to protect itself, uphold the country's peaceful strategy, and ensure the important period of strategic opportunity for the country's peaceful development. Adhering to the principle of self-reliance, China has adopted the road of military modernization with Chinese characteristics. This military modernization serves China's overall goal of national rejuvenation and aims at strengthening national defense and fostering world peace (Cheung, 2021). To increase military power for national defense, China has made significant progress in military modernization. The building of military forces should be coordinated with the development of the national economy and the living standards of the people, thus guaranteeing that the strengthening of military forces will benefit the economic development of the region. China is enlarging its military training, building up its military bases, strengthening the infrastructure for national defense, and modernizing its conventional and strategic forces. A strong military will permit China to defend its territorial integrity and political sovereignty, safeguard its maritime rights and interests, and engage in regional and global cooperation, underpinning regional and world peace. China believes that national defense and development can, and must, proceed hand in hand. The more a country develops itself, the less threat it will represent to other countries. China is resolved to maintain and promote regional peace and stability, development and prosperity, strengthen regional development, and advance regional cooperation and development. As the Asia-Pacific region undergoes multipolarization, the world becomes ever more multipolarized, and economic globalization embraces a new phase, China will continue to follow the road to peaceful development and contribute to regional prosperity and stability and the building of a better future for all mankind (Dunford, 2022).

- **South China Sea Dispute**

The South China Sea dispute is another issue that attracted much attention to the debate over China's rise and its impact on the world. The issue mainly involves four ASEAN countries, China, and Taiwan. However, it has become internationalized due to its overlapping security concerns related to the sea's strategic importance. With an estimated over 100 billion barrels of oil, representing perhaps 10% of the world's oil resources, the South China Sea might very soon become the focus of serious strategic rivalries among the great powers (Metelitsa & Kupfer, 2022). With its rapid economic growth, a developing country such as China is a rival for resources, and market access has deeper impacts on international relations.

The U.S. has played a significant role in the South China Sea dispute, which is at the center of the triangular relationship between the claimant states, with potential for future conflict. The South China Sea has long been a key trading route between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The United States began operating regular air

flights into the area after the Second World War as part of its strategic commitment to reengage in the Pacific. After the end of the war, it supported certain claimant states in granting direct sovereignty over some islands or atolls. In 1972, after the 'Opening Door Policy,' the U.S. and U.S.S.R. abandoned their restraints, particularly on the air and sea reconnaissance of these claims. Currently, five countries have introduced formal claims to the South China Sea, including China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Brunei. (Ho & Vuong, 2021)

Sustainable Development and Climate Change

The challenge of urbanization is closely linked to the problem of developing sustainable cities. In this sense, "sustainable" signifies upward mobility, decent work, access to basic goods and services, clean air and water, and a decent life for present and future generations. China has set the key objectives of building an ecological civilization, starting with the quality of urbanization, the degree of satisfaction with urbanization, and going on to green mobility, eco-cities, and circular economies. The key challenges of curbing environmental degradation and ending blind, inefficient, extensive production must be reduced. (Zhou, 2021)

The China Development Bank has already granted 19 billion yuan in loans for environmental protection, energy saving, pollution reduction, and ecological construction to 26 pilot zones. In 2012, the demand for ecological environment protection and pollution became extremely prominent, and the lack of a corresponding system and mechanism caused difficulties in financing the projects, such as high capital costs, particularly for the major environmental pollution companies with high risks. Therefore, the CBSC drew on foreign experience in the implementation of the Green Project to address several key policy references. (Malik et al.2021)

Green Energy Initiatives

China sees significant potential in renewable, clean, and affordable sources of power, aims to enhance its energy security, and aspires to change the trajectory of its conventional environmental problems caused by the mining and combustion of fossil fuels. Chinese officials are also responding to the responsibility placed on China by its high emissions of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that affects global climate change. An additional important effect of the transition of China from an export-oriented economy to one with a large and more sophisticated consumer sector will be the reduction of costs and the increase in availability of a broad array of clean or renewable energy conservation technologies (Lin & Li, 2022). These developments should also help to alleviate future environmental shortages and price escalations for a range of competitively used raw materials. In China, urban air pollution is now being recognized as a matter of national importance, where certain cities have become the most polluted in the country. Chinese officials worry about China's high emissions of carbon dioxide that affect global climate change and the tremendous demand from the West for gas-guzzling sports utility vehicles, the market share of low-pollution cars, and low-pollution, efficient electrical household appliances. China's ability to harness its manufacturing capabilities to mass-produce clean, efficient products and appliances is considered a major thrust of Chinese enhanced internal waste control initiatives and its strong public messages on China's increased global environmental responsibility.

Challenges and Critiques

This chapter presented arguments in support of China's economic model because its economic development actually increases the stability and strength of the international economic order. It is also in the interest of the world's economic growth. Although China's development and increasing influence appear to be a challenge to the existing international system, which probably precipitates the hegemonic power shift, in the long run, it actually ushers in a multipolar world in which China can play a significant peaceful role while ensuring that the world does not slide into hegemonic anarchy. There are challenges to China's growth, not only domestic ones but also those arising from its projected global influence. This chapter focuses on some of these challenges. Then, the book ends with a conclusion raising implications and policy prescriptions for China's policymakers and for the rest of the world to consider in deciding China's place within the existing international order and, in effect, proscribing the possible form of a post-hegemonic world order. The chapter challenges and critiques how China's rise poses multiple scenarios - the good, the better, the worst, and the ugly - that in the end, there is only one last question left: which scenario will prevail?

- **Human Rights Concerns**

China's treatment of dissidents, political and religious activists, and workers has engendered considerable concern in the US and Europe. A primary concern has been the Chinese Communist Party's repression of Tibetans and Xinjiang Uighurs, practitioners of Falun Gong, and independent trade union organizers. It has also criticized the Chinese government's pervasive surveillance apparatus, control and censorship of the media, religious repression, denial of freedom of assembly, speech and voting, labor abuses, and the unusually cruel manner in which it executes criminals. It has criticized China's collaboration with countries such as North Korea, Burma, and Zimbabwe, and its use of its veto in the UN Security Council to protect regimes that engage in genocide and other human rights abuses. (Franklin, 2023)

China's treatment of its workers, farmers, refugees, and fishermen has also fueled criticism. One concern has been official corruption, tax evasion, and the ruling party's suppression of independent unions, lawyers, journalists, and academics who seek to promote the rule of law. Another concern has been the Chinese government's ill-treatment of workers and farmers, past and future abuses of refugees from North Korea, and their frequent use of violence and intimidation to force foreign fishermen to cough up protection money and leave the South China Sea. Such concerns have led to suggestions that the US and Europe should combat Chinese repression and stimulate democratic reform by increasing trade with China only if it respects environmental and labor standards, and by conditioning development assistance on progress in human rights and the establishment of the rule of law. (Veeck et al., 2020)

Conclusion

In spite of many warnings and difficulties ahead, trend indicators suggest that China's rise as a leading international actor is largely peaceful in nature. If current trajectories persist, we should expect to see a Chinese contribution to the emergence of a relatively peaceful, relatively attractive multipolar world economy as an alternative to the US-dominated unipolar world with sharp global economic imbalances. Imbalances involving the dollar as the international reserve currency have certainly grown sufficiently in the US-dominated unipolar world so that

alternative currency arrangements, including co-sovereignty in managing the international global monetary base, are of interest to China and other key global actors. Conversely, China's initiatives aiming at a more pluralistic system of global economic governance leading to some movement in that direction should be welcomed and supported. China rightly emphasizes the importance of respecting national differences in systems of political governance.

China's road to rational modernization is unique in its intensity and rapid success. The integration of a poverty-stricken agrarian country succeeded remarkably by linkage with a design of the world economy which combines a mix of old-fashioned mercantilism complemented by a socialist economy's market-driven integration into the global economy. Such long-term high economic growth is best sustained by being institutionally embedded in global governance structures. Since China's successes bear on the bottom line, the very existence and strength of the China model seem to suggest that in the bi-mutually competitive dialogue of models, the American system, too, has something fundamental to learn. It is realistic reciprocity in this dialogue that will pave the peaceful way for China's rise.

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