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Foreign Policy and Regime Legitimacy - China as a Responsible Peacekeeper?

Paper 2465

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Outline

I Introduction ..............................................................................................................................................3
  1. A liberal approach to explaining Chinese multilateral policy ......................................................4
  2. Regime legitimacy and the concept of a responsible great power ...............................................8
     1. National Identity .................................................................................................................................9
     2. Political Ideology .............................................................................................................................10
     3. Socio-economic order .....................................................................................................................12
II Participation in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations ..............................................................13
  1. Identity as a responsible power ..........................................................................................................16
  2. Ideological foundation in the ‘Harmonious World’ ...........................................................................17
  3. Performance and mutual benefit ........................................................................................................19
III Conclusion ...........................................................................................................................................21
IV Bibliography ......................................................................................................................................23

Abstract

With regard to the survival of authoritarian regimes in Asia, the paper takes a closer look at foreign policy behavior within international institutions as regime stabilizing factor. In comparison to bilateral relations or non-formalized international cooperation, international institutions can serve as legitimizing force and forum for image building. Rules and standards defined by the institution set out a clear standard for appropriate international behavior and establish hierarchies in which power relations evolve.

For the paper at hand a single case study will be undertaken examining Chinese policies with regard to United Nations peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) during the tenure of Hu Jintao. The empirical analysis shows that regime legitimizing and stabilizing aspects of Chinese participation in UNPKOs are central to a significant increase in Chinese engagement.

By deploying capable, force-enabling blue helmets, China is supporting the image of being a “responsible” actor in international relations, thus trying to build trust and improve China’s image on a global level, generating positive domestic repercussions. Military capabilities are being modernized and exposure to international operations enhances operative potential, promoting the domestic perception of a strong and internationally respected military. Additionally, the heroization of Chinese peacekeepers through state propaganda is supposed to enhance identification with the party leadership. UN peacekeeping works as an excellent field for the Chinese government to demonstrate integration with the world as well as a more principled Chinese approach to international relations (in clear dissociation of US or Western policies) thus satisfying both moderate as well as nationalist domestic audiences.
I  Introduction

Chinese foreign policy making in the era of Hu Jintao has attracted various academic contributions. (Bachman, 2003; Buzan & Foot, 2004; Cabestan, 2009; Carlson, Gallagher, Lieberthal, & Manion, 2010; Economy, 2010; Jakobsen & Knox, 2010; Johnston & Ross, 2006; Kim, 1998; Kurlantzick, 2011; Lai, 2010; Lanteigne, 2009; Mattis, 2011; Miller, 2009; Ramo, 2004; Wang, 2003; Wang, 2005; Wang, 2010; Wu & Lansdowne, 2007; Wu, 2003; Zhao, 2003) This is no surprise as significant alterations in China’s international behavior and status can be detected. Not least since the financial crisis 2007/8, with its considerable impact on Western economies, China has become an unexpected source of resilience. With Hu Jintao’s tenure is in its final year and his political heir apparently selected, survival of the Communist party (CCP) regime in the People’s Republic seems temporarily secured. But what are the factors leading to the stabilization of Communist Party rule?

The study of authoritarian regimes thus far neglected the dimension of foreign policy in the academic debate (see Kneuer, 2011, p. 13). In current discussions, the persistence of the Communist regime in China is usually ascribed to the Party’s successful economic performance. Indeed, economic explanations initially seem most plausible. The Communist Party is taking credit for China’s unparalleled economic rise and thus allegedly stabilizes its rule by keeping growth rates at constant levels, while silencing scattered unrest promptly and violently. (see Yu, 2009, p. 111)

Economic success has been brought about by the reform and opening up policy, gradually integrating China into the global markets. Until today, China’s export oriented economy is highly dependent on international partners and a stable trading environment. While remaining in relative isolation till the late 1970s, opening up to the outside world under the conditions of globalization necessitated the development of a Chinese foreign policy, able to transcend the ideologically dominated isolationist approach of the Mao era. (Deng, 2008, p. 1ff) After a hesitant beginning, the twenty-first century has marked a significant soaring of China’s engagement with the existing multilateral framework. (Wu & Lansdowne, 2007)

While Chinese foreign policy has often been described as reactive to outside forces and policies in international organizations have been framed in terms of socialization or integration (most elaborately, see Johnston, 2008) this only sheds light on part of the development and evolving dynamics. The Chinese leadership itself has begun to shape international policy ma-

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5 A good example for this lack of research is also Brooker (2009), who just recently wrote an introductory compendium on non-democratic regimes - foreign policy finds no significant mentioning.
king and operates with increasing ease and confidence in multilateral fora (Deng, 2008). It can thus be stated that the necessity of foreign policy decision-making in engaging with the outside world under the condition of globalization, has evolved into the proactive and strategic use of foreign policy on a domestic as well as international level. Multilateral organizations play a significant role in this process. Among the various international organizations the United Nations has outstanding value for Chinese foreign policy. Not only is the world body praised as the “single most important organization” for Chinese foreign policy making (Yu, 2005, p. 189). With China’s elevated role as permanent Security Council member, the UN is a major provider of international status and prestige and the forum of choice for international cooperation for the Chinese leadership. As Deng indicates and interviews of the author have confirmed, the UN is also an exception to China’s usually more opaque decision-making processes. On the banks of the East River, “Chinese diplomats are most comfortable in detailing concrete markers of their nation’s growing influence [...]” (Deng, 2008, p. 12).

This paper aims to bring the above observations together and searches for causal links between the persistence of CCP rule and increased multilateral activism in Chinese foreign policy.

Assuming that “domestic politics matter” and that a combination of domestic and transnational forces shape foreign policy making, a liberal approach is tested. It is argued that the Chinese government is trying to actively promote a multilateral policy that satisfies a broader range of domestic societal groups to generate legitimacy for its continued leadership role, while also helping to shape a responsible and strong international image, reinforcing legitimacy on the domestic level. The argument is tested and assessed by analyzing Chinese engagement in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (PKO). UN peacekeeping has attracted a high degree of attention from Chinese authorities and marked the most significant shift from rejection to active promotion in the realm of Chinese UN policies, thus having the potential to show a shift in foreign policy strategies due to regime legitimacy considerations.

1 A liberal approach to explaining Chinese multilateral policy

Liberal foreign policy analysis has to be distinguished from “liberal” foreign policy. The distinction is fundamental to the basic premise of liberal (or “new liberal” (Moravcsik, 2008; Moravcsik, 2010)) international relations (IR) theory. Liberal IR theory defines an approach to the analysis of international relations, which focuses on domestic and international determinants of state behavior but remains generally undetermined with regard to the regime type of states under scrutiny. Claiming universality in explaining international dynamics, there is no inherent limitation to its application to the full range of regime types be it democracies, totalitarian, aut-
Liberal foreign policy analysis, is thus not reserved for the analysis of the foreign policy of “liberal democracies”. Nevertheless, its premisses have hardly ever been employed for explaining the behavior of authoritarian states (for notable exceptions see the brief attempt by Harnisch & Wolf, 2010 as well as; Lai, 2010) - despite the fact that the analysis of “domestic politics in nondemocracies offer[s] a fresh avenue for gaining insights into international behavior” (Weeks, 2008, p. 61). Domestic or societal influence has been identified as an important factor shaping a state’s policy towards multilateral institutions (see, for example, Karns & Mingst, 1990, p. 310). This holds true for authoritarian regimes as well - there is always a domestic audience to please and a certain degree of responsiveness to societal demands can be identified. An initial attempt in analyzing this responsiveness has been made by Weeks (2008). She refers to Fearon (1994) when presenting her concept of “autocratic audience costs”. Fearon argues that authoritarian states have much lower audience costs and are thus less restricted in their policy options in international conflicts (see Fearon, 1994). Weeks has rebutted this argument convincingly, by taking a closer look at the variance between authoritarian regimes and the domestic repercussions of their foreign policy behavior (see Weeks, 2008). While both Fearon and Weeks focus their analysis on international conflicts and the potential to reduce arising security dilemmas, the basis of their argument remains relevant for foreign policy behavior in general with regard to authoritarian regimes. It is, however, necessary to identify how and why domestic political factors matter.

Liberal IR theory offers a good starting point for this endeavor. Moravcsik argues that “it is a theory that stresses the role of the varied social interests and values of states, and their relevance for world politics.” (Moravcsik, 2010, p. 1) In his view there are three basic assumptions characterizing a modern liberal approach to the nature of the international system, the state, and societal actors. First, globalization lies at the core of international relations as “[w]ithout globalization, societal actors, like states, would have no rational incentive to attend to world politics.” Second, state preferences are shaped by the demands and interests of “a subset of domestic individuals and social groups.” And third, the “pattern of interdependence among state preferences shapes state behavior.” (Moravcsik, 2008, p. 236ff.)

Transferring these assumptions to a liberal analysis of foreign policy, the determinants of a
state’s foreign policy under the condition of globalization can be found at the nexus between state preferences and the identified patterns of international interdependence. (see Moravcsik, 2008; Moravcsik, 1997; Moravcsik, 2010) The liberal perspective offers explanations for variance in the content of foreign policy. (Moravcsik, 2008, p. 246) State preferences are derived from social preferences and usually formed endogenously, though in the long run not free from influence of transnational forces. Depending on the regime type, the generation of state preferences can range from being an expression of a general societal agreement reached through democratic processes or can be heavily dominated by particular societal forces or political elites. State preferences are thus what the relevant societal groups regard as being in their interest and cannot be equated with the realist notion of “national interest”. Preferences can even run counter to national interest - whereas national interest defines what is best for the country - in a realist paradigm: state survival as well as maximizing (relative) state power and influence (see Lai, 2010). State preferences are constituted by the views of social groups that represent the state (see Moravcsik, 2010, p. 2). Preferences have to be distinguished from strategies. They are prior to strategies, which are merely the means to the end of reaching preferences and can be subject to rather frequent change, adapting to alterations in the domestic and international environment. (see Moravcsik, 2008, p. 238)

In an initial attempt to frame China’s striving for international status within the liberal paradigm, Harnisch and Wolf argue that China attempts to balance the support of nationalist tendencies to create ideological unity and distinction from a constructed potentially harmful “other” under the condition of increased interdependence at the “causal nexus [...] between ideational and economic components in a policy equilibrium of rhetorically predatory behavior, economic cooperation and actual military restraint” (Harnisch & Wolf, 2010, p. 21). While the claim that Chinese behavior is dominated by predatory, nationalist rhetoric and exceptional military restraint is not necessarily substantiated by empirical findings, considering the significant ambiguity in Chinese rhetoric and actions along the full spectrum of cooperation and conflict especially over the past five years, their claim that ideational factors can be more important than material ones in preference formation is increasingly valid. The ideational costs of foreign policy decisions “cannot be accounted for without considering [the Chinese leadership’s] relative domestic position” in combination with the influence of transnational factors. The relative domestic position is determined by shifting ideational social preferences, such as, for example, nationalism or ‘new left’ currents. Transnational factors that influence preference

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(5) Moravcsik is rejecting the idea of “levels of analysis” as misleading as domestic and international factors determine each other under the condition of globalization and thus the idea of clearly distinguished levels is analytically misleading.(see Moravcsik, 2008, p. 249)

(6) Jia Qingguo argues that Chinese nationalism itself is neither new nor as significantly “on the rise” as often proclaimed, but is infused and fueled from the outside. (Jia, 2005, p. 11) He states that membership in international organizations and active participation especially within a UN framework has weakened nationalistic tendencies. China urges other countries (first and foremost the United States) to refrain from circumventing international legal commitments and respect their obligations derived from UN membership. (Jia, 2005, p. 19)
formation range from regional security constellations to conflicts of interest with the remaining hegemon or other relevant (state) actors. Ideational costs are high if they result in forfeiting reputation, credibility or legitimacy. (see Harnisch & Wolf, 2010, p. 23f) With regard to China, Deng assesses that domestic policy considerations and general public content have been the drivers for significant foreign policy decisions and strategic alterations. While preferences do not necessarily change, the strategic means by which to attend to these preferences often do. (Deng, 2008, p. 5)

In a liberal approach, an active, cooperative foreign policy can be expected, if interdependencies exist and state preferences converge. Multilateral cooperation in this sense is the institutionalized form of dealing with interdependencies. In other words “[w]here national claims can be made more compatible through reciprocal policy adjustment, efforts to cooperate explicitly through international institutions are more likely.” (Moravcsik, 2010, p. 6) Broadly defined international institutions “involve persistent and connected sets of rules (formal or informal) that prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations” (Keohane, 1988, p. 383). The United Nations is an especially significant example of such an institution with the UN Charter as dominant international legal mechanism setting the formal rules of the game as well as the normative framework for behavior. Additionally, the UN gives host to a significant number of informal agreements and rules of procedure. It clearly defines (actors’) roles, constrains activity of states’ and manages expectations regarding the challenges of and limits to international cooperation.

This makes the analysis of Chinese policies within multilateral institutions seem especially fruitful for the question of foreign policy as a regime stabilizing factor: In the highly institutionalized setting of an established international organization such as the UN, the potential effects of a respective Chinese foreign policy strategy are more predictable, able to generate credibility to enhance positive domestic repercussions with regard to stability and legitimacy, thus satisfying the underlying preference of the party regime: persistence of CCP rule.

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(7) In some cases even individuals, for example, with regard to the sanctions regimes in pursuant to Resolution 1267 and 1373 of the Security Council (Al-Qaida Sanctions).
Regime legitimacy and the concept of a responsible great power

“Plainly stated, the main goal for the state is domestic regime survival.”

(Lai, 2010, p. 20)

Just recently several academic contributions with regard to regime legitimacy and China (see Holbig, 2009; Guo, 2003; Heberer & Schubert, 2009; Heberer & Schubert, 2009; Holbig, 2011; Laliberté & Lanteigne, 2008a; Laliberté & Lanteigne, 2008b; Tong, 2011) or authoritarian regime legitimacy and foreign policy in general (see Kneuer, 2011) have been published.

Most striking among the China literature are Holbig’s findings. She argues for an extension of Beetham’s legitimacy theory (see Beetham, 1991) to include the international dimension of legitimacy generation (Holbig, 2011, p. 171). In close reference to Beetham she identifies three levels of legitimacy: legality, performance coupled with normative justifiability and consent (see Beetham, 1991, pp. 16ff and 64-16ff and 99).

State preferences in the Chinese case are shaped by the ongoing discourse on preferences between the party and other influential elites as well as transnational restraints. The dimensions of legitimacy are representative of the overall discourse on policy formulation. “Legitimacy” can thus be regarded as overall state preference on the internal as well as external dimension. The government’s legitimacy is evaluated constantly by the domestic and the international audience with regard to the policies it pursues. Any foreign policy thus has to serve the stabilization of legitimacy both domestically and internationally as they are mutually reinforcing and potentially co-dependent.

In attempting to combine Holbig’s findings from a comparative or area studies perspective with an international relations context, the notion of “legitimacy” can serve as a link. Liberal IR theory analyses the legitimacy of domestic order along three dimensions “national identity, political ideology, and socioeconomic order.” (Moravcsik, 2008, p. 241)

This corresponds with Holbig’s three-dimensional understanding of the concept and Scharpf’s often cited definition of legitimacy, as divided in input and output legitimacy as well as collective identity, which has been taken up in recent debates on authoritarian foreign policy by

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* Legality describes the legitimacy gained through governance by “established rules”, which can be formally codified in constitutions, laws etc. or informally defined. The mere governance by the existing legal framework, however, is insufficient for the perception of the political order as being legitimate. Holbig states that rules have to be normatively justifiable in two dimensions, the adequate allocation of public goods or the “pursuit of the common interest” and the “rightful source of authority”. Lastly, this authority has to be “confirmed by expressed consent” through mass mobilization or elections, “even if this is voluntary only to a limited degree”. (Holbig, 2011, p. 168) In an earlier contribution Holbig defines those levels as conformity of rules, justifiability of rules and legitimacy through expressed consent (Holbig, 2009, p. 15).
Kneuer (2011; see also Scharpf, 2009).

The elements of legitimacy will be outlined below and analyzed for their foreign policy relevance.

Table II.2 a: Dimensions of Legitimacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Legitimacy</th>
<th>Liberalism</th>
<th>Holbig/Beetham</th>
<th>Kneuer/Scharpf</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>national identity</td>
<td>consent</td>
<td>collective identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>political ideology</td>
<td>legality</td>
<td>input legitimacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic order</td>
<td>Performance and normative justifiability</td>
<td>out-put legitimacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Based on (Beetham, 1991; Holbig, 2011; Kneuer, 2011; Moravcsik, 2010; Scharpf, 2009)

2.1 National Identity

One could argue that “national identity” is a murky indicator for the legitimacy of a regime, as the concept of ‘identity’ in social science research is in itself contested and lacks a standardized definition.⁹ (Abdelal et al., 2009, p. 31) Without entering the identity debate, national identity in this paper shall be understood as the collective role conceptions in dissociation to a respective “other.”¹⁰ Chinese national identity is not static, it has changed significantly over the years. Deng argues, that the shift in China’s multilateral behavior towards increased activism also “reflects a reconstituted national identity that values globalization, responsibility, and win-win international relations.” (Deng, 2008, p. 244)

National identity is a necessary factor in defining oneself within an international context. Chinese identity is dependent upon its self-role conception, which can be defined as “the core of a grand causal map which statesmen employ to make sense of the world” (Shih, 1988, p. 600). In this process multiple identities can be held at the same time and conflicting identities can be held by “different groups contending for access to to the policy-making process” (Shih, 1988, p. 600).

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⁹ In an attempt to frame the debate Abdelal et al. (2009) have arrived at a framework for conceptualizing the fluid concept of identity as a matter of “content and contestation”, whereas there is always a collective meaning of identity (national, ethnic etc.) which is at the same time subject to a constant process of discursive contestation and thus never static.

¹⁰ A permanent search for “an ‘Other’ to prove, through contradiction, what one was or was not, composed a typical modern Chinese political drama.” (Shi, 2003, p. 21)
The dominant Chinese identity portrayed within a multilateral context is currently that of responsible power, which is constructed internationally and supported in the domestic discourse (see Richardson, 2011).

To maintain the legitimizing notion of responsibility, the Chinese leadership is required to constantly work on a positive international image. National image-building is a difficult process. It is highly dependent upon the perception of the respective recipient. (see Wang, 2003, p. 51ff.) It can be differentiated between objective (such as developing country or major power) and subjective (peace-loving, cooperative etc.) images. Objective being measurable relatively easily by objective factors (such as GDP, military budget, member of P5) and subjective depending on interpretation and perception. In the objective realm there is “relatively little room for the art of image-building” (Wang, 2003, p. 61). The subjective realm is where the Chinese government can make use of various forms of public diplomacy to build a positive international image. However, positive changes to China’s international image are difficult to achieve especially within the Western world, as stereotype-challenging images are less likely to be accepted (see Wang, 2003, p. 51ff.) This means that China, even if it is acting cooperatively on the international stage can at times still be confronted with a negative perception, attributing positive behavior as being strategic. Thus achieving a positive international image for China entails more than cooperative rhetoric and adherence to international norms. It requires consistency and a long-term objective as rapid changes in perception cannot be expected. It can be argued that China’s self-perception is increasingly determined by its international appeal and “structural legitimization problems regarding public consent at the national level can [...] be partially compensated for by reporting about international recognition.” (Holbig, 2011, p. 179)

2.2 Political Ideology

In an earlier publication Holbig (2009, p. 15ff) has discussed the role of ideology to generate legitimacy. It can serve as a strategy, as ideology can “provide the normative foundation for the rightful source of political authority [...] define the performance criteria of government, [...] and [...] serve as a stimulus to mobilize popular consent” (Holbig, 2009, p. 16). Even under the conditions of one-party rule and a ‘Communist’ ideological basis, political authority can be generated on the basis of the consensus of the people, as they give their consent to the rule of the party based on “objective laws” and a “scientific” basis for governing, which is allegedly se-

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(11) There are usually forces within a state, which are not related directly to the foreign policy making process, but enter the stage at “difficult times when the dominant image conception cannot be effectively enforced or fails to make sense in a changing world” and thus re-position their national role-conception. (see Shih, 1988, p. 603)

(12) Hu Jintao’s ideological twist the “Scientific Concept of Development” (kexue fazhan guan) can be seen in this context. It is supposed to make the Communist Party appear as the implementor of objective principles for the common good of all Chinese peo-
parated from “human” decision making and additionally arrange for bottom-up mechanisms in form of a petition system or local level elections (see Holbig, 2009, p. 17). Recent developments in China show, that an emphasis on rule of law and new forms of public participation are being introduced to substantiate the party’s legitimate rule. Legitimacy has to be reproduced continuously. Lately, the party has been eager to merge existing (Communist) ideological legitimation with new principles (sometimes drawing on a Confucian tradition) to fill emerging voids in the ideological landscape.

In the foreign policy context this ideological framework is the concept of “harmonious world”, which finds its corresponding domestic equivalent in “harmonious development” or “scientific” development. The de facto departure from a socialist ideology in modern China has led to what is referred to as an “ideological vacuum”, which is allegedly being filled with nationalist rhetoric (see Gries, 2005, p. 256), a turn or re-turn to modern socialist ideas (the “new left”) (see Mishra, 2006; Wang, 2009) or vapid materialism. With the concept of “harmonious development” or “harmonious world” the Chinese administration under the leadership of Hu Jintao attempts to find some ideological foundation for its policies and the legitimation of its rule. The concept remains fuzzy in its concrete meaning, however, sharing his thoughts on building a “harmonious world” in front of the UN General Assembly Hu Jintao elaborated on some of the elements for Chinese international diplomatic rhetoric. First and foremost, the idea of “harmonious world” includes the preservation of a peaceful international environment through multilateral cooperation. Drawing on the Chinese experience he links peace inextricably to development, the latter being unable to achieve and uphold without the former (see Hu, 2005).

Stressing the role of the UN Security Council in this process, puts the Chinese leadership at the heart of the decision-making, providing it with importance and authority. Second, he names mutual benefit in development, alluding to the fact that Chinese economic development was “homemade” by the work of the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party (see Hu, 2005). Likewise, however dissociating the Chinese understanding of mutual benefit in development from the exploitative behavior of the colonial powers, framing modern day China as a reliable partner of the developing world. By third naming the “spirit of inclusiveness to build a harmonious world together” (Hu, 2005), Hu is distancing himself from leveling cultural differences instead embracing them as catalyzers for progress and change, also legitimizing the right of every country to choose the social and political system that they regard as adequate, thereby associating the Chinese system as something valuable for international development and legitimizing Communist party rule. As vague as the ideological concept may seem with regard to concrete political implications, it is thus quite clear with regard to the way it tries to

ple. (http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/40557/55596/, 2006) and (Fewsmith, 2004)
shape the international discourse.

Ideology can thus also frame the setting for the evaluation of the last element identified by Moravcsik regarding legitimate rule - socio-economic order.

2.3 Socio-economic order

Performance is central to the survival of a regime not only in authoritarian states (see also Derichs, Heberer, & Sausmikat, 2004; Holbig, 2009, p. 18f.). Performance is evaluated against the background of being able to provide peace and prosperity to the Chinese state. It is not to be defined in narrow economic terms of constant economic development and rising living standards, but also to the existence of a social-security network and the overall upkeep of a peaceful and secure (domestic and international) environment. In accordance with Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) on average, authoritarian regimes are in office twice as long as democratic regimes. They argue that “the institutionally appropriate choice of policy performance - good or bad - enhances the prospects for political survival” (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, p. 5).

The argument of authoritarian regime survival falls short if it is based merely on the assumption that the leadership holds enough repressive power to oppress any meaningful opposition. (see Desai, Olofsgård, & Yousef, 2009) It does not explain the great degree of variance, with regard to the longevity of authoritarian regimes or gradual change. It can thus be argued that oppression is only part of a strategy in authoritarian leadership.

Any leader’s power is based on a “winning coalition”, which “controls the essential features that constitute political power in the system” (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, p. 5) and benefits from the respective power distribution. The government provides private goods for its winning coalition, which can include special tax reliefs, trade advantages or corruption. If a leader loses a significant number of supporters from his winning coalition he can lose grip on political power. It could be expected that leadership based on a broad societal basis would have a stabilizing effect on political survival, however, the contrary holds true. Members of the winning coalition are derived from the “selectorate”, a broader societal group. Central to a member’s support for a respective government is the expectation of personal (material or ideational) benefits. A small winning coalition and a large selectorate lead to very reliable supporters, “because the risk and cost of exclusion if the challenger comes to power are high”. However, if a winning coalition becomes larger with regard to the selectorate the exclusiveness of the relationship and “special privileges” disperse and loyalty to the leadership decreases (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, p. 8).

Based on these assumptions, it can be argued that the Chinese leadership’s survival is no longer linked to a very small and rather homogenous “winning coalition” limited to the upper
echelons of the Communist Party, but that this coalition has become increasingly diversified and much broader. For the timeframe under scrutiny the Chinese leadership has thus been confronted with a less uniform elite and depends on a broader societal group, supporting the leadership’s policies or limiting policy choices. Providing the socio-economic basis for legitimacy can thus be significantly under challenge from the domestic as well as international dimension. (see Brooker, 2009, p. 135) Engaging in multilateral cooperation can enhance the party’s potential to provide for economic benefits as well as stabilization of a peaceful environment. Additionally, the regime has to be able to “establish a plausible relationship between the citizens’ subjective perceptions of the regime and its performance and to positively ‘frame’ this relationship as demonstrating the regime’s competence, efficiency, fairness, commitment to the unselfish pursuit of the common interest, etc.” (Holbig, 2011, p. 169).

Enhancing legitimacy - in all its dimensions, internally and externally - is thus key to regime stability. (see Bachman, 2003) Only few factors determining the regimes survival are fundamentally domestic in nature most have significant international implications and thus shape international behavior.

The hypothesis of this paper is thus, that increased Chinese engagement in UN peacekeeping Operations helps create legitimacy for the CCP government as it serves both the nationals and international dimension by demonstrating close integration in a multilateral security architecture and the taking over of responsibility while standing at the same time for a more principled Chinese approach to international relations in clear dissociation of US or Western policies thus satisfying both moderate as well as nationalist domestic audiences balancing ideational conflicts, by being a responsible great power.

II Participation in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

A wide range of contributions have recently been published on the subject of Chinese UN peacekeeping participation. In their general tenor their findings largely correspond. In most cases, they address the topic from the Chinese perspective, detailing the motivations of China to pursue a more proactive stance (see Gill & Huang, 2009; Hirono & Lanteigne, 2011; Huang, 2011; International Crisis Group, 2009; Ling, 2007; Pang, 2005; Richardson, 2011; Teitt, 2011). Many of the contributions are of great empirical value and offer interesting insights in the processes at play (especially in form of in-depth single-case studies (see Hirono, 2011; Lanteigne, 2011)). Survey-based contributions reveal remaining difficulties in acquiring tenable data for analysis (see Zhao, 2011). For the analysis at hand Chinese peacekeeping activity serves as a good example for various reasons: (1) UN peacekeeping in its peace and security dimension lies at the core of international relations, (2) it is a formalized, institutionalized and
established example of multilateral cooperation, (3) it is a good example of Chinese multilateral activity as it is intentionally well documented, (4) there is a sufficient amount of research and material available to built for the attempt to frame the debate more theoretically. The primary sources drawn on are the relevant documents released by both China and the United Nations as well as international and domestic Chinese news media, personal interviews and academic contributions both from Chinese and Western backgrounds.

From a historical perspective, China was generally opposed to international peace operations during the early days of its UN membership, regarding them as mere interventionism of western powers. The Chinese leadership refrained from voting on respective issues in the Council and refused to pay its assessed contributions to the peacekeeping budget. This policy became more nuanced with the beginning of the opening up process in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Despite still not being actively involved, rhetoric support for peacekeeping missions strictly abiding by the principles of the UN Charter began in 1981. (see International Crisis Group, 2009, p. 5) With accession to the UN Special Committee for Peace Operations, responsible for the review and assessment of all missions carried out under the authority of the DPKO, in 1988, the gradual integration process into the UN peacekeeping architecture continued. It lead to the first deployment of civilian election observers to Namibia and a small group of military observers to the Middle East at the turn of the decade. China continuously increased its engagement in numbers and capacity of deployed personnel. Also supporting missions, which – under considerations of ongoing rhetoric constraint concerning the intervention in the domestic affairs of other states – went far beyond the tasks of classic peacekeeping. For example, in the Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) by contributing financially and by deploying 800 engineers in 1992/1993 (see Ling, 2007), or by sending police officers to the UN Mission in Bosnia Herzegovina (UNMIBH) in 2001. (International Crisis Group, 2009, p. 6) The policy of limited support on a case-by-case basis evolved, allowing for a pragmatic and flexible approach.13

Currently, China deploys little over 2,000 men and women in 11 of 16 operations administered by the Department of peacekeeping Operations (see Table II.a and b) with the largest contributions to UNMIL (Liberia) and the Sudan Operations UNMIS and UNAMID (Darfur).14

As Table II.a shows Chinese engagement since 2004 largely follows the trend as far as the overall deployment of missions is concerned, showing that Chinese engagement is directed towards the respective needs of the organization. Table II.b is demonstrative of the significant changes that China’s willingness to deploy personnel has undergone.

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In an attempt to explain this trend drawing on the theoretical framework established above, Chinese attitude towards peacekeeping in the Hu era is analyzed according to national identity, political ideology and socio-economic order. On the internal as well as external dimension, these three aspects have been identified as having the potential to underpin the legitimacy of CCP rule. Of course, no comprehensiveness is claimed with regard to the empirical findings, which could be elaborated much more detailed.
As stated above, it is analytically not feasible to ascribe China a general national identity. In a UN context, however, the role of responsible power demanded by an international audience and the identity, which is promoted by the leadership in accordance with a significant number of the Chinese (academic) foreign policy elite converge (see Zhu, 2010, p. 39ff; Huang, 2011, p. 260f) - significantly contributing to the stabilization of this identity. Zhu Liqun (2010) made an effort in summarizing current Chinese academic foreign policy debates and devotes a special section to the meaning of responsibility. The term, despite being frequently used, is highly ambiguous and clearly lacks a distinct definition. Courtney Richardson, however, argues that this ambiguity is the greatest strength of the concept as it leaves sufficient leeway for flexible interpretation and is "evocative without being restrictive" (Richardson, 2011, p. 288).

Towards an international audience identity can be defined as ‘image’. A positive image is not easily constructed. Merely stating positive intentions is certainly not sufficient. Thus opportunities to improve the image with active participation, at low cost and predictable risk are highly valuable in this process. Especially if this activity takes place within a clearly defined framework and is constitutes a longer-term inclusion thus having the potential to actually change the perception of state behavior.

Domestically, building a coherent and cohesive national identity can be supported by the international image but is also dependent upon the internal debates on what the national identity is supposed to be. Generally, the concept of responsibility is seen more inward oriented, implying that international peace and stability as well as global socio-economic development is helped most if China focuses on its own stability and development (see Zhu, 2010, p. 42). However, certain exceptions to this general focus are also seen as important, including especially efforts in combatting non-traditional security threats and engaging in international peacekeeping operations, which is often connected to the special responsibility for developing countries (see Zhu, 2010, p. 41ff).

In peacekeeping operations it is not the Chinese leadership itself acting, but its soldiers and police officers deployed on the ground. There has thus been increasing political activism under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Security to train and educate Chinese peacekeepers and focus on especially well-qualified personnel. This training, which is conducted in meanwhile two specially designated training facilities\(^\text{15}\), includes language proficiency as well as international exchanges to enhance cooperation and mutual learning. In comparison to many other na-

\(^{15}\) Police Training Center: China peacekeeping Civpol Training Center (CPCTC), established in August 2000 in Langfang City in close proximity to Beijing; peacekeeping Training Center, established in 2009 in Huairou also located in suburban Beijing, see: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-06/25/content_8324367.htm and http://www.mps.gov.cn/n16/n983040/n1372264/n1372567/1501154.html.
tions, China prides itself in sending only the best of the best into international operations; often highly qualified force enabling personnel, such as engineers or medical officers. (see Gill & Huang, 2009, p. 7f; International Crisis Group, 2009)

Chinese peacekeeping personnel is hailed for its professionalism and efficiency. (see e.g. UN-MIL, 2004; Daily, 2007) There have been no charges of misconduct against them - much to the contrary of many other peacekeepers over the years\(^{16}\). What is being stressed in the domestic press is especially this outstanding quality of the Chinese peacekeeping personnel deployed in missions around the globe as well as their strong commitment to the job. (see e.g. Xinhuanet, 2007) The deployment receives the attention of main television news and returning peacekeepers are honored by domestic officials. Their role in preserving international peace and security and contribution to an international environment supporting trade and development is being underlined. This heroization finds itself also clearly in the language used to mourn the death of Peacekeepers killed in action.\(^{17}\) Chinese behavior is portrayed in clear dissociation with historic examples of Peacekeepers of other nations (including Western peacekeepers in the 1990s) by stating that Chinese Peacekeepers “never left in the middle of a mission” (Huang, 2010). At the same time the positive the framing of Chinese peacekeeping activity as successful and highly appreciated contribution to international peace and security assists in softening the image of the Chinese military at home and abroad. Diverting from the ‘China Threat’ argument and embedding the military in a positive public discourse to avoid potential cleavages, actively shaping the relationship between the party, the people and the military.

Peacekeeping thus successfully contributes to the development of a cohesive identity as responsible actor in a multilateral framework, domestically and internationally, generating public consent with the respective foreign policy \(\text{see Zhao, 2011, } \#56185\) and reducing the legitimacy deficit arising through the limitations in input legitimacy, due to a lack in electoral processes or other forms of institutionalized public participation.

2 Ideological foundation in the ‘Harmonious World’

Drawing on the main ideas identified by Hu as central to the concept of “harmonious world” the most important element for the ideological underpinnings of multilateral engagement in peacekeeping operations is the nexus between peace and development. This broad framework also finds resonance in the UN discourse and is included in the multidimensional approach to PKOs (see Oertel, 2010, p. 161).


\(^{17}\) Expressions such as “heroic martyr” are used to describe the Peacekeepers killed in action. (see Huang, 2010)
The “harmonious world” stands first and foremost for international peace and security in so far as it supports the development of all nations for mutually beneficial relations. The CCP might have more and more trouble to patch the Communist facade, but it has undoubtedly achieved tremendous economic development and lifted millions of Chinese out of poverty. This allows the Chinese leadership to credibly talk about development in international fora such as the United Nations and even assume to speak on behalf of the developing world. Presenting China as the spokesman of the developing world in official rhetoric, constructs the party as a strong and capable actor, ready to confront the pressing global problems and committed to China’s international obligations (see Yang, 2010). China is an important donor and engages increasingly in development cooperation, such as infrastructure projects. The aspect of support for the developing world and a greater emphasis on development than on ‘good governance’ also plays a significant role in its peacekeeping policy (Hirono & Lanteigne, 2011, p. 248).

Consolidating peace remains an inherently difficult task – it does not only include elements of security sector reform and the re-establishment of police forces, which China assists in East Timor, Liberia or Haiti. Building peace also includes various other duties such as return the of internally displaced persons and refugees, disarmament and general state-building responsibilities. Zhao suggests that China is cautious when it comes to peacebuilding as its focus on development arises the suspicions of Western powers regarding Chinese intentions (see Zhao, 2011). However, the Chinese leadership stresses the importance of local ownership and self-determination in re-building the state in the aftermath of a conflict. According to China’s current deputy representative at the UN, Ambassador Wang Min, it is the central task of a UN operation to help the respective countries “ensure basic security, promote the political process, provide basic services, support core government functions and reinvigorate the economy and development” (Wang, 2011). World Bank data indicates that “peace-keeping offers significant economic benefits” (Lin, 2010, p. 3) to the respective host nation and is generally supportive for overall development, thus being in line with the Chinese harmonious rhetoric on mutually

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(18) This support of the developing world has been a major part of Chinese UN policies since 1971. China owed its membership also to the majority of the developing nations in the General Assembly voting in favor of Resolution 2758, restoring Chinese rights in the United Nations (UN Doc. A/RES/2758, 1971).

(19) Shogo Suzuki even argues, that China’s peacekeeping policy is an example of paternalistic tendencies in Chinese foreign policy, regarding their own development as superior to developing nations and thus giving China the authority to intervene and “guide them to the path of development” (Suzuki, 2011, p. 271). He develops an argument for Chinese interventionism on the basis of an initial evaluation of the Chinese academic discourse and detects the existence of a “moral superiority” with regard to the Chinese development model.


(21) Lin argues further that “[i]n the first three years after conflict, the presence of a UN peacekeeping force translates into growth rates that are 2.4 percent higher than in a post-conflict country without a UN peacekeeping force. Missions with multidimensional mandates are particularly effective in increasing growth which, in turn, lessens the likelihood of a relapse into conflict as economic development and reconciliation create the conditions for future prosperity” (Lin, 2010, p. 3)
beneficial relations with developing countries. With the ideological foundations carefully rephrased to adapt to the conditions of the twenty-first century, the Chinese leadership attempts to find a domestic as well as international narrative for its international engagement and obligations. Peacekeeping offers valuable opportunities to underline the important connection between self-determination, international peace and national development, however, direct causal links between the ideological foundation and Chinese multilateral engagement are hard to establish as the ideological framing initiated by the Chinese leadership remains too broad.

3 Performance and mutual benefit

The socio-economic basis for the legitimacy of CCP rule is essential for the survival of the regime. Peacekeeping is certainly not central with regard to immediate economic gains or the improvement of social equality on a domestic level. Peacekeeping engagement is an active proof in framing the debate that the party is guarding Chinese nationals’ lives as well as Chinese economic interests abroad. Internationally it displays the capabilities of the Chinese military and the advances in technology and cooperation underlining the party’s effort in building a modern Chinese state. As stated earlier, drawing on Holbig, establishing the link between certain improvements and the leadership’s policies in for the common interest is thus the key to normatively justify legitimacy with regard to out-put performance and the stabilization of socio-economic order.

A good example in this regard is the Chinese engagement in the UN operation in Darfur (UNAMID). China is engaged in peace operations in Sudan since 2005. China’s role has been prominently observed as China is one of the top trade partners (see Lai, 2010, p. 122) of the country’s authoritarian leadership under Omar al-Bashir and draws heavily on the oil resources extracted from Sudan (for a detailed account see Large, 2008). Due to its economic support of the regime, China was in part made responsible for the persistence of violence in the country (see Hirono, 2011, p. 337) and China’s initial blocking of Security Council activity was perceived negatively on the international stage. Insistence on host nation consent for the deployment of peacekeeping operations has been a dominant feature of China’s peacekeeping diplomacy, in the case of Darfur, however, where the humanitarian crisis on the ground was more than evident this principled approach interfered with the strive for a ‘responsible’ international image and constructive international behavior, leading China to use its leverage on the Suda-
nese leadership to gain support for a hybrid African Union-UN operation based on Resolution 1769 (2007) (UN Doc., 2007). By later deploying a significant number of troops in the mission, the Chinese leadership attempted to underscore its commitment to the resolution. In the domestic debate China’s peacekeeping activities in Sudan where portrayed as essential for international peace and stability but also for the improvement of living standards of the Sudanese people, praising the Chinese peacekeepers achievements especially in the areas of infrastructure construction and medicare. The peacekeepers “not only fulfill their obligations for peacekeeping missions, but also convey Chinese people’s friendship and love of peace to the local people in destination countries” (Xinhua, 2008), framing the efforts as part of intensified efforts in promoting Chinese public diplomacy (see Ling, 2007, p. 48f). At the same time Chinese business interest in the country is large and has supported a soft Chinese stand on sanctions against Sudan. After, however, Chinese investment had become at stake due to increased violence and instability and Chinese workers based in Sudan had become targets in the fight between government forces and rebel groups (Hirono, 2011, p. 338), the Chinese government can be seen as forced to act with regard to an important domestic interest group - the business elite. The changes in Chinese strategy from blocking, to active participation in the peacekeeping operation were thus not only due to the calculated costs of losing international image and the implied negative repercussions, but it suggests that they were also evaluated with regard to the domestic audience. The tenor of academic contributions on the subject is often, that the abandonment of its blocking position in the case of Darfur constitutes a significant alteration of China’s general acceptance of multilateral intervention - contrary to its usual insistence on national sovereignty and non-interference. However, drawing on the domestic politics argument suggests that beside image concerns and alleged socialization effects, domestic concerns regarding the stability of CCP are concurrent arguments for the observable shift in policy. It can thus be assumed that if the convergence of the domestic and the international dimension is necessary to secure Chinese support peacekeeping operations.
Table II.3 Overview of strategies in peacekeeping to generate legitimacy internally and externally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Legitimacy</th>
<th>Moravcsik</th>
<th>Holbig/Beetham</th>
<th>Kneuer/Scharpf</th>
<th>Stripes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>national identity</td>
<td>consent</td>
<td>collective identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>political ideology</td>
<td>legality</td>
<td>input legitimacy</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>socio-economic order</td>
<td>performance and normative justifiability</td>
<td>out-put legitimacy</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peacekeeping Policy</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>internal: ideology, cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>external: image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal: ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>external: recognition</td>
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<tr>
<td>internal: socio-economic development</td>
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<tr>
<td>external: performance</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration of the military, heroization of Peacekeepers, nationalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting China’s image as responsible power, dissociation with “irresponsible” Western states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing the party as strong and capable actor, committed to China’s international obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting a harmonious world, supporting developing countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing the debate that the party is guarding Chinese nationals, as well as economic interests abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaying Chinese (military) capabilities, public diplomacy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### III Conclusion

The paper attempted to show, that the causal link between regime legitimizing strategies and multilateral policies - though far from being an exclusive explanation - offers some valuable insights in motivations and processes of Chinese foreign policy making.

By deploying capable, force-enabling blue helmets, China is supporting the image of being a “responsible” actor in international relations, thus trying to build trust and improve China’s image on a global level, generating positive domestic repercussions. Military capabilities are being modernized and exposure to international operations enhances operative potential, promoting the domestic perception of a strong and internationally respected military. Additionally, the heroization of Chinese peacekeepers through state propaganda is supposed to enhance identification with the party leadership. UN peacekeeping works as an excellent field for the Chinese government to demonstrate integration with the world as well as a more principled Chinese approach to international relations (in clear dissociation of US or Western policies) thus satisfying both moderate as well as nationalist domestic audiences.

Though positive repercussions of China’s increased peacekeeping activism with regard to the CCP so far clearly prevail, it also holds significant risks. The greater the Chinese engagement becomes the higher the risk of a potential failure or misconduct. This could immediately render
the legitimizing aspects void and reflect negatively on the party - both at home and abroad. The strategic orientation towards more global engagement is thus a treacherous path which necessitates the party to tread carefully and act cautiously, explaining why no significant alterations to the current case-by-case decision-making should be expected on a short-term basis. While political elites play a distinct role in the policy formulation process its is also an “ideational foundation of preferences which put[s] pressure on politicians” (Gourevitch, 2002, p. 311). International institutions thus are derivatives of preferences, and their performance determines “who uses them” (Gourevitch, 2002, p. 311).

By applying the findings of area studies (Holbig) and comparative research on authoritarian regimes (Kneuer) to the peacekeeping case while framing them in the broader debate on liberal foreign policy analysis an interesting link between international relations theory and comparative politics could be established, which needs further exploration and more detailed qualitative case studies to better trace domestic decision-making processes. Regime analysis allows for a better understanding of the respective domestic circumstances at the core of international decision making. An international relations approach allows to explain the dynamics of international cooperation. UN politics in the twenty-first century are located at the nexus between the two - highly determined by domestic factors, interdependent and mutually constitutive.
IV Bibliography


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