

## **Motivations behind China's Increased Involvement in International Peacekeeping Operations**

### **Project Purpose:**

How has China's involvement in international peacekeeping changed over the years and what does it mean for the future?

### **Project Importance:**

Napoleon Bonaparte famously said: "Let China sleep, for when she wakes she will shake the world." One can safely say that China has indeed awakened. As of 2016, China has the second largest economy in the world with the highest Gross Domestic Product Purchasing Power Parity. Because of China's economic might, the Asian nation has been recognized by many as a growing if not a major power with increased influence internationally especially after the 2012 financial crisis (Pu 2012). While much focus has revolved around China's economic development over the past few decades, less attention has been afforded to its military contribution to international peacekeeping operations and what that means to the world. A survey of literature also shows that game theory analysis has not been done to explain or predict China's peacekeeping involvement making this project both novel in subject and methodology.

### **Project Overview:**

Many an opinion piece has been written about the rise of China and its potential intentions. Fewer academic papers focus on growing Chinese involvement in international military cooperation (Shambaugh 2004). China's increased peacekeeping contributions are as impressive as its economic development and more attention must be given to the trajectory of China's international security (Gill and Reilly 2000). This is especially pertinent for several reasons. First, both the number of peacekeeping missions and troops are at an all-time high (Gao 2016), pointing to a volatile international security situation. Second, America, the traditional champion of peace, is heading towards a decreasing global role, at least in rhetoric. Third, while China's economic capacity has grown, so has its involvement in peacekeeping. Socialization theories would explain this shift as part of China's integration into a Western world order where global powers contribute to international organizations and peacekeeping (Kent 2002). These same theories predict that on the flip side, international norms eventually evolve to reflect national culture of emerging superpowers. Studies have been conducted to show how as expected from theories of socialization, China's integration into the global order has changed international norms and organizations like the World Bank (Chin 2012). Thus, if China's involvement in peacekeeping operations continue to increase due to socialization, it could eventually lead to changes in current norms and practices.

Relying on theories of constructivism and game theory models, the question of how China's involvement in international peacekeeping operations changed over the years and what it means for the future will be answered through two prongs. First, a collection of primary and secondary sources will be analysed to piece together a narrative of China's foreign policy agenda and checked for whether China's involvement in international military operations have been

influenced by a process of socialization. This narrative of China's strategy and engagement in international military operations will be mapped out against its military contributions to UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions as found on the United Nations Peacekeeping website. The Chinese Foreign Policy Database – Wilson Center Digital Archive provides a collection of official correspondents between China and the United Nations. The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN also provides a record of speeches made by Chinese ambassadors in the United Nations regarding peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. This record will supplement the archive from the Wilson Center in proving an evolving Chinese strategy of global military engagement. Yet, China's involvement in peacekeeping is not limited to troop. As such, statistical indicators like dues paid to the UN, China's GDP and its military budget will be plotted to see if and how these metrics correlate to the number of Chinese troops involved in peacekeeping. Adding a quantitative analysis to the narrative of peacekeeping involvement will provide a more holistic perspective on the trajectory and strategy of China's strategy of international military involvement.

Second, does China's decisions to (a) be involved in international military operations and (b) contribute to UN missions as much as they do correlate with what we would expect a rational country to do? Several game theory models will be presented analyzing if China's involvement in international military operations correlate with what one would expect rationale actors to do. The narrative plotting Chinese involvement in peacekeeping will not only highlight the factors influencing its decisions, but also point towards the utility China receives from peacekeeping contributions.

### **Qualifications of Thesis Committee:**

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Eric Hyer - Associate professor in the Department of Political Science at Brigham Young University and the Coordinator for Asian Studies. His research focuses on China's foreign relations.

Faculty Reader: Dr Jay Goodliffe - Associate professor in the Department of Political Science at Brigham Young University. His research often utilizes game-theoretic models and econometric analysis.

Honors Coordinator: Dr Michael Barber

### **Project Timeline:**

November 05 – Literature review of international socialization and constructivism theory

November 15 – Complete compilation of documents from The Chinese Foreign Policy Database  
– Wilson Center Digital Archive

November 25 – Complete compilation of documents from The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN

December 13 – Game theory idea finalized

December 14 – Research paper due (paper excludes game theory section)

January 30 – Complete edit of research paper

February 25 – Draft of game theory section

March 20 – Complete edit of research paper

### **Culminating Experience:**

Together with the Honors thesis advisor, potential avenues for publication will be explored.

### **Scholarly Sources**

- Chin, Gregory. 2012. "Two-Way Socialization: China, the World Bank, and Hegemonic Weakening." *Brown J. World Aff.* 19: 211.
- Gao, George. 2016. "UN Peacekeeping at New Highs After Post-Cold War Surge and Decline." Pew Research Center. Accessed October 17, 2017. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/03/02/un-peacekeeping-at-new-highs-after-post-cold-war-surge-and-decline/>.
- Gill, Bates, and James Reilly. 2000. "Sovereignty, Intervention and Peacekeeping." *Survival* 42, no. 3: 41-59.
- Kent, Ann. 2002. "China's International Socialization: The Role of International Organizations." *Global Governance* 8, no. 3: 343-364.
- Pu, Xiaoyu. 2012. "Socialisation as a two-way process: Emerging powers and the diffusion of international norms." *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 5, no. 4: 341-367.
- Shambaugh, David. 2004. "China engages Asia: reshaping the regional order." *International security* 29, no. 3: 05.