EXPLAINING CHINA’S ACTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1971-2012

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION


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The main puzzle in this dissertation is that China has one of the worst domestic human rights practices in the world, but it has a very active voting record in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on human rights resolutions and is active in general internationally on human rights. Using rational choice’s emphasis on actors acting to advance their preferences, I argue that domestic factors explain this puzzle. More specifically, it is the perceived domestic threat to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule that determines the way the Chinese government acts on the human rights issues explored in this dissertation. Each main chapter in this dissertation documents this pattern of the relationship between the Chinese government’s perceived threat to CCP rule and the Chinese government’s reaction. The findings in this dissertation have policy implications for INGOs and states seeking to influence China’s human rights policies. To answer my central question (what accounts for China’s actions on human rights in the UNGA?), I focus on multiple forms of action by the Chinese government in the UNGA.
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Introduction

The puzzle: poor domestic human rights, but active in international human rights diplomacy

The main puzzle in this dissertation is that China has one of the worst domestic human rights practices in the world, according to data sets that measure government-led human rights abuses, but it has a very active voting record in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on human rights resolutions and is active in general internationally on human rights. China’s active role in voting in the affirmative for UNGA human rights resolutions is at odds with its increasing repression of such rights at home. The Chinese government is very concerned about potential threats to its rule and modifies its voting and statements in the UNGA based on such perceived threats.

My dissertation is largely exploratory research, as this topic has neither been researched before nor is it clearly defined. As such, my dissertation fills the gap that currently exists in the literature on this topic. The main argument in this dissertation, which largely draws upon rational choice’s emphasis on state actors acting based on their preferences and making calculations for such actions, is that the perceived domestic threat to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) determines the way the Chinese government reacts to human rights issues in the UNGA. Using rational choice in this dissertation, I follow the distinction posited by rational choice theorists\(^1\) that acting rationally means that the person is acting in a manner to advance his interests. Rational choice thus employs a different meaning of the term

\(^1\) See Quackenbush 2004: 95.
“rational” than is commonly used in daily life or the denotation. For example, with the Chinese government's actions in Tibet and Xinjiang, the Chinese government is acting in precisely the way stated above, that is, the Chinese government is acting according to its preferences: keeping Tibet and Xinjiang under PRC control. If the Chinese government were to allow more freedom in Tibet and Xinjiang, then that could potentially result in those two provinces becoming independent, which is anathema to the Chinese government. Thus, even though the CCP does not allow for genuine autonomy in Tibet and Xinjiang, it is acting according to its preferences and thus operating in an “instrumentally rational” manner based on such preferences. Therefore, I use rational choice to explain China's actions with its: (1) voting in the UNGA on human rights resolutions, (2) its statements at the UN on human rights, and (3) the cases of Tibet, Xinjiang, Liu Xiaobo, and Darfur.

The Chinese human rights puzzle has been addressed before by focusing on four main explanations: (1) Asian values; (2) sovereignty; (3) modernization theory; and (4) international pressure: A) economic sanctions and B) naming and shaming. However, I argue that we need to look beyond such explanations in order to have a more complete understanding of China's actions on human rights in the UNGA. In order to test my argument that it is the perceived domestic threat to CCP rule that determines the way the Chinese government acts on human rights, I suggest an examination of China's voting in the UNGA on human rights resolutions from the

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2 Quackenbush, 2004: 95.
3 Liu Xiaobo is a pro-democracy activist who has been serving a prison term due to his involvement with a document (Charter 08, which will be explained in greater detail) that called for various freedoms in China. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010.
year that China joined the UN (1971) to 2012\(^4\) and an examination of Chinese statements at the UN on human rights.

Using rational choice, I study the relationship between the perceived threat to Chinese Communist Party rule and China’s actions on human rights issues by examining China’s voting behavior on human rights resolutions and the statements it has offered on human rights at the UN. I combine different dimensions of research methodology (both quantitative and qualitative) for a mixed methods approach to create a new understanding to fully address this puzzle. This pattern of the Chinese government acting according to the perceived domestic threat to CCP rule is revealed in all of my main chapters in this dissertation—on voting in the UNGA and its statements offered in the UNGA (chapters 5 and 6), and with case studies that deal with what the CCP regards as core interests (chapter 7).

Regarding the chapters on China’s voting behavior in the UNGA from 1971 to 2012 on human rights resolutions (chapters 5 and 6), I demonstrate a stark contrast to China’s domestic human rights practice. In my examination of China’s voting in the UNGA, it is important to state that I do not equate a vote in the UNGA in favor of a human rights resolution with support for human rights in general; instead, it is the voting behavior that is the focus. Nonetheless, this focus on China’s voting behavior demonstrates a significant discrepancy in China’s approach to human rights. On the one hand, China represses domestically, and on the other hand, China has a consistent voting record in the UNGA regarding voting in the affirmative on human rights resolutions. Thus, this dissertation distinguishes between China’s voting

\(^4\) The data set that I use for UNGA roll call votes ends in 2012.
behavior in the UNGA on such human rights resolutions and supporting human rights. On a related topic, I recognize that Beijing has been able to prevent resolutions criticizing its human rights practices from coming to a vote in the UNGA and in the international human rights regime, as China has the support for this by Russia and developing countries in Asia and Africa. In the previous United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), China often successfully advanced motions to prevent votes that were critical of China on human rights. In other words, China uses its muscles to get its way in the UN. Therefore, I acknowledge that China has been strategic in the UNGA regarding voting on such resolutions and its operations in general regarding human rights in the UN. Moreover, since my focus on the UNGA ends in 2012, I do not examine the aggressive change of Chinese direction (both domestically and internationally) in the Xi Jinping era.

Regarding China’s voting behavior on such human rights resolutions, it is important to emphasize that I examine the UNGA resolutions at face-value, and thus do not examine the background of the resolutions or the behind the scenes intent. Instead, I focus on the language contained in the resolutions through a content analysis. I have read through all of the resolutions, which consisted of thousands of pages. In the resolutions, there were ample references to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and various other international human rights instruments. As such, the language of the resolutions allows for the appearance that China is a supporter of human rights resolutions in the UNGA. This dissertation is neither an examination of how China has prevented votes critical of China’s domestic human rights practice nor one that focuses on how China has limited
country specific votes in the UN. Instead, the focus of this dissertation, using rational choice’s emphasis that actors act in a manner that advance their preferences, is how the Chinese government acts in a manner that advances its preferences both in the UNGA on human rights and with the domestic human rights cases.

The significance of UNGA voting

In 1995, even when China’s standing in world politics was significantly less influential than it is in recent years, China stated that the US’ proposed UN resolution admonishing China’s human rights practice would damage US-Chinese relations, which reflects the importance that China places on actions at the UN.5 More recently, Xinhua ran an article in 2012 with the title: “United Nations enjoys ‘strong support’ from China: UN chief.”6 The article highlighted the positive statements that the UN Secretary General offered regarding China’s role at the UN.

In this dissertation, I argue that the UNGA is a significant institution to study when examining international politics. On the topic of the UN broadly and the UNSC, the UN is the closest international mechanism for maintaining world order. The UNGA provides the only opportunity where the vast majority of countries debate and vote on many important global issues, and voting in the General Assembly reveals countries’ individual and collective preferences on these salient issues. Furthermore, I argue that UNGA decisions can generate a significant impact and

5 Tyler, 1995.
6 http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-07/13/c_131712190.htm
result in states acting based on such UNGA resolutions, such as action taken by states to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.\textsuperscript{7}

\textit{Human rights}

There are two main categories of human rights: 1) political and civil; and 2) economic, cultural, and social rights. Given that the PRC is an authoritarian political system, the Chinese government, in following its rational choice preferences, has rejected political and civil rights domestically and has instead stressed the importance of development issues that focus on economic and social rights. Thus, China disagrees with the West on the meaning of human rights. The West has largely focused on seeking to advance political and civil rights in China—not economic rights—with its naming and shaming, but since the Chinese government states that it favors economic and social rights, it focuses on that category.

The following existing explanations have been used to address China’s actions on human rights: (1) Asian values; (2) sovereignty; (3) modernization theory; and (4) international pressure: (A) economic sanctions and (B) naming and shaming. The four previously-mentioned explanations are useful in examining China’s practices towards human rights, but they are not sufficient. As a result, I will provide an alternative to the four explanations in the following section. In order to test my argument, I suggest an approach that examines China’s actions on its voting behavior on human rights resolutions in the UNGA and an examination of

\textsuperscript{7} For example, in 2008, Brazil’s Minister for Social Development and Fight Against Hunger, Patrus Ananias, stated that the primary reason that the Brazilian government initiated its social program Zero Hunger was to achieve a Millennium Development Goal. Rocha 2009, 62.
statements in the UN on human rights. But first, a list of the key terms that I focus on in this dissertation is necessary.

Key Terms

• **Modernization theory** is the idea that as the economy develops, political openness follows. This argues that economic improvement leads to greater political openness.

• **Human rights** in this dissertation is defined as either 1) economic, cultural, and social, or 2) political and civil.

• **Asian values** is the view that political and civil rights are less important than the urgent need for economic development in such developing countries. Moreover, civil and political rights vary based on countries and cultures. According to the Asian values argument, since Asian countries are different from the West regarding cultural issues, the West is not justified in seeking to advance its ideas of human rights in China.

• **Rational choice** is the IR approach that I use to explain China’s actions on human rights in this dissertation. Rational choice does not equate decisions with rationality per se; instead, actors are rational in acting according to their objectives.

• **Socialization** in this dissertation is defined by states or actors learning by either doing or being involved or interacting with other actors or states and then modifying their actions to reflect what they have learned.

• **Sovereignty** is the notion that each country has jurisdiction for issues occurring within their country, especially regarding human rights.

• **Core interests** for this dissertation involve domestic territory, such as Tibet and Xinjiang, and activists, such as Liu Xiaobo, who pose a threat to CCP rule. Regarding the relationship between core interests and human rights issues, the Chinese government is very concerned about anything that may pose a threat to CCP rule and thus acts based on such calculations to advance CCP rule.

• **Sanctions** is defined as the attempt by country A or an IO to cause economic harm to country B with the goal of having country B
acquiesce or change its policies to the liking of country A because it is too costly economically.

- **Naming and shaming** is the attempt to call out publically, or, as the title suggests, “name and shame,” a human rights abuser for the human rights abuses (usually political and civil rights) being carried out. The goal of such naming and shaming is a change in behavior that does not abuse human rights.

- **Norm localization** involves local actors adapting outside ideas to the domestic context. This is especially the case for non-Western cultures.

*Alternative explanation*

While scholars have put forward the four previously mentioned approaches to explain China’s approach to human rights, I provide an alternative explanation, which uses rational choice’s emphasis on actors acting to advance their preferences. The main hypothesis put forward in this dissertation is that there is no discrepancy between China’s poor domestic human rights practice and its active international involvement in terms of Chinese perceptions and motivations. Even though China is active internationally regarding human rights, such as signing numerous international human rights treaties, its active voting in the UNGA, and the ample statements made by Chinese delegates at the UN in which they boast of the optimistic human rights situation in China, to name three examples, it is domestic concerns that determines the CCP’s actions on human rights. More specifically, it is the Chinese government’s perceived threat to CCP rule that determines how the Chinese government acts on human rights in the UNGA with its voting and its statements offered. In revealing this pattern, I will examine the way the Chinese government modified its actions in the UN on the issue of Darfur, which illustrates
how the Chinese government acts in the UN when there is a low threat level to CCP rule. To answer the main question of this dissertation (as stated in the abstract: what accounts for China’s actions in the UNGA on human rights issues?), my alternative explanation consists of the perceived threat level to CCP rule. In short, using rational choice, I argue that the Chinese government acts and modifies its actions on human rights because of the perceived threat to CCP rule. I demonstrate that the Chinese government acts in a manner on the human rights issued explored in this dissertation that is consistent with advancing its preferences.

1. The relationship between core interests and threat to CCP rule

The Chinese government has recently listed many issues as core interests. Dai Bingguo, who was a key figure foreign policy in Hu Jintao’s administration, published an article in 2010 entitled, “We Must Stick to the Path of Peaceful Development.” In that article, Dai stated that China has ample core interests, “first, China's form of government and political system and stability, namely the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the socialist system and socialism with Chinese characteristics. Second, China's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity. Third, the basic guarantee for sustainable economic and social development of China.” According to Dai, preserving CCP rule is the most significant core interest, and for this dissertation, preserving CCP rule explains why China's voting record in the UNGA and its actions with the case studies that I examine. Drawing from Dai’s article and other government documents, The Beijing

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8 http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/cpop_665770/t777704.shtml
Review, which is China’s leading magazine written in English, states that the CCP considers the following as core interests: “state sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity and national reunification, China’s political system established by the Constitution, overall social stability, and the basic safeguards for ensuring sustainable economic and social development.”

Therefore, Chinese core interests are plentiful. Among these core interests, not all are equal in terms of how they are perceived by the Chinese government. The CCP views some core interests as more essential in terms of preserving CCP rule than others. As a result, the Chinese government acts differently depending upon which core interest is at stake.

Regarding the relationship between core interests and human rights issues, the Chinese government is very concerned about anything that may pose a threat to CCP rule and thus acts accordingly.

Because the Chinese government is very concerned about any potential threat to CCP rule, it is unwilling to accept any part of China breaking off. Due to that Chinese preference, the CCP adamantly rejects any potential calls for allowing more autonomy or progressive action in places such as Tibet and Xinjiang because of the perceived threat level to CCP rule. This explains why the Chinese government reacts the way it does to international calls for action in such provinces or with activists such as Liu Xiaobo, who is viewed as wanting to bring an end to CCP rule. In short, it is the perceived threat level to CCP rule that explains the pattern that is demonstrated in this dissertation regarding the Chinese government’s voting

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9 “China’s declaration of key interests misinterpreted,” 2013.
10 At numerous press conferences held by the Chinese Foreign Ministry, the issue of core interests and China potentially breaking apart have received much attention and concern by the Chinese government. See the following press conferences for this:
behavior in the UNGA on human rights resolutions, its statements on human rights in the UN, and resisting international pressure on domestic human rights issues such as Liu Xiaobo, Tibet, and Xinjiang. Regarding the other case that is examined in this dissertation, Darfur, we see the Chinese government modifying its actions more toward the stance of Western states because of the lack of perceived threat to CCP rule.

2. China’s active but selective voting in the affirmative for human rights resolutions in the UNGA

Scholars have argued that one prominent characteristic of China’s voting in the UNGA has been its non-interference policy: China opposes discussing an individual country’s domestic human rights in the UNGA.\footnote{Kinzelbach 2012, 313; Sceats and Breslin 2012.} As a result, it is expected that China would vote very differently on the human rights resolutions related to individual countries (i.e., country-specific resolutions). In the 1990s, China’s voting in favor of human rights resolutions decreased, due to votes condemning human rights abuses in developing countries. Prior to the 1990s, there were not many votes in the UNGA on human rights resolutions that condemned the governments of developing countries. Thus, the 1990s represents a changing point regarding Chinese voting behavior in the UNGA. In the 1990s, we see a significant difference from China’s earlier voting, as China abstained or voted against human rights resolutions for many of the votes because such votes condemned the governments of developing countries. Since China wants to be on good terms with developing
countries, it does not vote to condemn the governments of such countries, as China would then be subject to such scrutiny and pose a threat to CCP rule. This demonstrates how China acts in the UNGA according to its preferences, which is adequately explained by rational choice.

Summary of the chapters

In chapter one, I focus on a number of topics to set the stage for this dissertation. First, I provide the necessary context for Chinese voting behavior in the UNGA, focusing on East Asian economic and political development. In section two, I focus on the different explanatory dimensions that already exist: Asian values; sovereignty; modernization theory; international pressure: 1) economic sanctions and 2) naming and shaming. Then, in section three, I focus on my alternative explanation: using rational choice to explain the role of the threat level to the CCP.

In chapter two, I justify my mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data sources. Based on the publically existing UNGA data set, I create a data set on China’s votes on human rights resolutions and describe the patterns of such Chinese voting behavior in the UNGA on human rights resolutions. I also examine statements by Chinese delegates to the UN on human rights issues. It is the combination of such sources that is my added value in this dissertation.

In chapters three and four, I provide a detailed review of the literature and historical background on human rights generally and in China. Some of the main topics contained in chapter three are China’s concern regarding international events
and its evolving role in global affairs. I also examine how human rights have evolved globally and in China. Ample space is devoted to how scholars and PRC dissidents view civil society in China. Chapters three and four provide the necessary context for examining the topic of human rights in China.

In chapters five and six, I argue that China’s voting behavior on human rights resolutions in the UNGA provides a unique opportunity to examine my research question in a systematic way. In chapter five, I demonstrate how, despite its very poor domestic human rights practice, China has consistently voted in the affirmative on human rights resolutions in the UNGA. This pattern of voting in the affirmative on such human rights resolutions is in sharp contrast to China's domestic human rights record. Using rational choice, this chapter also advances the central argument of the dissertation (the CCP is very concerned about perceived threats to its rule and acts according to the way it perceives such threats) by observing how China modifies its voting behavior in the UNGA on human rights resolutions according to the perceived domestic threat level to the CCP.

In Chapter six, I examine China’s voting in the UNGA on country specific resolutions that contain a human rights component. My findings reveal that there is a stark contrast in China’s voting on country specific human rights resolutions. Based on the quantitative analysis of China’s voting on country specific resolutions, I demonstrate that the conventional notion of China as being opposed to country specific criticism on human rights is not accurate, as China has voted in the affirmative on many country specific resolutions. Consistent with the overall argument of this dissertation, this chapter uses rational choice to demonstrate that
China's voting behavior on country specific human rights resolutions in the UNGA is a response to perceived threats to CCP rule.

Also in chapters five and six, I examine the way that Chinese delegates at the UN speak about human rights issues. These statements also advance the overall argument of the dissertation: the Chinese government acts according to perceived domestic threats to its rule. Examining such statements significantly adds to the overall argument of the dissertation by examining the language used by Chinese officials in such primary documents. Regarding the connection between my findings from chapters five and six and the various approaches, the Asian values argument does not hold. As I observed with China's statements that delegates issued in the UNGA and with China's voting in the UNGA, the Chinese government has been willing to admonish the US and other Western countries on human rights. Thus, the Asian values argument also does not adequately explain China's approach to human rights in the UNGA. While the Asian values argument does a good job in explaining China's prioritizing economic development over political development, overall, however, the Asian values argument is of limited value in understanding China's actions on human rights in the UNGA.

The Chinese government has long-argued that issues occurring inside of China, especially human rights issues, are sovereign issues and thus the responsibility of the Chinese government—not of other states or transnational actors. However, the Chinese government has not been consistent regarding its stance and actions on sovereignty. Due to such inconsistencies by the Chinese government, sovereignty also does not fully explain why China acts in the UNGA on
human rights issues. If China did respect sovereignty, as it says it does, it would have abstained on all of the UNGA votes that are country specific. In short, if the Chinese government were consistent about its stance on sovereignty, it would not have voted in the affirmative on the UNGA country specific resolutions in which Israel, the UK, and Portugal were denounced on such human rights cases. Instead, the Chinese government decided to vote in the affirmative on such resolutions, and in the process, voted to denounce Western countries and supported the governments of developing countries. Moreover, if China did respect sovereignty, China would not have issued such statements critical of the US on human rights in the UNGA.

Yet another example that demonstrates how China does not act consistently on sovereignty is with the Chinese government’s restructuring of its domestic economy according to WTO and international trade regime requirements. In short, regarding participation in the international trade regime, we see China acquiescing on sovereignty issues. However, on human rights issues involving sovereignty, we see adamant resistance to changing domestic policies on human rights. In other words, regarding sovereignty, there are some instances in which China is more willing to work with international actors and standards and less willing in other cases. Regarding human rights issues involving political and civil rights within China, there is significantly less likely a chance that the Chinese government will initiate change because of the reasons stated in this dissertation: It is perceived as a threat to CCP rule. In short, the sovereignty argument is of limited value in understanding the research question of this dissertation.
In chapters 5 and 6, I demonstrate how, when examining the percentage of UNGA resolutions that contain a human rights component, China has consistently voted in the affirmative on such UNGA resolutions. From 1971, which was the year China joined the UN, until 2012, China voted in the affirmative for the vast majority (79 percent) of human rights resolutions in the UNGA. When I examined the resolutions, it was clear why China has such a voting record: China has consistently voted with the governments of developing countries in the UNGA. In other words, if a human rights resolution is either favorable for the government of a developing country or if the resolution criticizes a developed country because of its actions in a developing country, China votes in the affirmative on such resolutions. This pattern is observed by China’s voting behavior and how it modifies its voting in the UNGA according to the perceived domestic threat level to the CCP. I have argued that China has done so not to be a champion of human rights in the UNGA, but rather to advance its own interests and to prevent any potential threat to CCP rule, which reflects the CCP’s paramount goal of survival and advancing itself.

In chapter seven, which also employs rational choice, I use a case study approach to focus on four significant events that adequately demonstrate how the Chinese government acts according to the perceived threat to CCP rule on human rights issues. In contrast to how the other chapters in this dissertation focus on Chinese actions in the UNGA and thus outside of China, this chapter focuses on three cases in which the events occurred inside of China. The four cases in this chapter advance the argument of the dissertation and reveal how the Chinese government acts according to the perceived threat level to its rule.
In the conclusion, I sum up the main findings and the contributions of this dissertation. Also, I evaluate China’s actions from the perspective of various IR theories and approaches. I then explain how I intend to expand my findings in the future.

**Conclusion**

In order to understand China’s actions (both in terms of its voting behavior and the statements issued by Chinese officials) regarding human rights issues in the UNGA, I argue that there is a clear relationship between the international and domestic components. In short, using rational choice’s emphasis on actors acting to advance their preferences, I argue that it is the Chinese government’s perceived threat to CCP rule that determines its actions with its (1) voting behavior in the UNGA, (2) statements in the UNGA, and (3) modifying its actions in the UN on Darfur. In other words, the Chinese government acts in a manner that advances its preferences on the human rights issues explored in this dissertation. In order to test this hypothesis, I have my main research question: What accounts for China’s actions in the UNGA on human rights?

This dissertation makes several contributions. First, it focuses on topics that have not received adequate attention in the literature—such as an examination of China’s voting in the UNGA on human rights issues and an in-depth examination of statements made by Chinese delegates at the UN on human rights issues. Another main contribution is that this dissertation has relevance for China scholars, human rights scholars, IR scholars, IO scholars (especially scholars studying the UN), and
for both state and non-state actors (such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch for example) seeking to advance policy changes regarding China and human rights. Because of the relevance for actors seeking to advance policy changes regarding China and human rights, my dissertation has policy implications. Based on my findings, I come up with recommendations for future research.

Chapter 1: Explanatory dimensions and an alternative explanation

Abstract
This chapter examines the economic and political background for China’s UNGA votes on human rights. In this chapter, I focus on a number of topics to set the stage for this dissertation’s focus. This chapter consists of three main sections. The first section addresses: 1) the East Asian economic and political context; 2) providing a snapshot of China’s role in the global economy; 3) the different types of human rights; and 4) China’s emphasis on economic rights. In section two of this chapter, I focus on the different explanatory dimensions that already exist: 1) Asian values; 2) sovereignty; 3) modernization theory; and 4) international pressure: A) economic sanctions and B) naming and shaming. Then, in section three of this chapter, I will focus on my alternative explanation, which uses rational choice theory to argue that the Chinese government acts in a manner to advance its preferences, which are based on the role of the perceived threat level to the CCP.

The East Asian Context: East Asian economic and political development

In focusing on China, it is important to provide some historical context regarding East Asian economic and political development. In addition, doing so allows for the opportunity to engage in comparative politics in East Asia. In the post-World War II (WWII) context, the Asian Tigers’ (Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea) emphasis on free trade and good economic policies successfully developed their economies. After WWII, Singapore, Japan, and South Korea emphasized export led growth in developing their economies. Then, in the 1980s, both Taiwan and South Korea moved towards political openness. Both South Korea and Taiwan democratized peacefully or by liberal evolution. Even though
Japan (which is not part of the Asian Tigers), South Korea, and Taiwan all have a long history with a Confucian emphasis, they are all democracies now with constitutions. However, it is important to point out the American influence in steering these countries on the road to democracy occurred as the Cold War was in its final phase. Throughout much of the Cold War, US international relations in East Asia (specifically US policy with Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan) was not about advancing democratization or human rights, as the US was a staunch supporter of authoritarian rulers in those countries. But the US modified its stance with some countries regarding the US’ wishes of ending authoritarian rule. In addition to US pressure, there was significant domestic pressure in both Taiwan and South Korea to democratize. In short, both Taiwan and South Korea had homegrown democratization movements. In Taiwan, for example, the KMT under Chiang Ching kuo's final years received pressure from the US to democratize.12 This is important to recognize in the context of democratization for China. The US does not have the leverage with China that it did with those previously mentioned countries, and there is not a homegrown democratization movement in China, as the current political environment does not allow for it.

Snapshot of China’s role in the global economy: from Mao to Deng

China’s economic development, which Deng initiated, has been essential for China’s ascendancy globally, and therefore some attention is necessary. Under Mao, his economic focus on class conflict permeated all aspects of society. After Mao,

China underwent tremendous change, with Deng Xiaoping stating: “To get rich is glorious.” Since 1978, there has been significantly less government control of the economy and society. In abandoning class conflict, Deng Xiaoping viewed strong economic success as essential for the CCP remaining in power. Moreover, after crushing the pro-democracy movement in June of 1989 in Tiananmen Square, Deng viewed the need to expand economic openness as essential in order for the CCP to remain in power. Thus, he embarked on a Southern Tour during the Chinese New Year in 1992 in which he visited Shenzhen and other Special Economic Zones to make the case for speeding up economic reforms in China. Due to Deng’s Southern Tour, economic reforms spread throughout the country. During the year of Deng’s Southern Tour, numerous CCP officials, including Deng, visited Singapore. While China has been gradually liberalizing its economy since 1978, the government still has a significant role in the economy. In reflecting how the economy in China is essentially state-led capitalism, state owned enterprises (SOEs) accounted for approximately half of the country’s GDP in 2011.

With the ascendancy of China, there has been ample debate about how China’s rise will change world politics. At the heart of the matter is China’s authoritarian political system. For example, China’s lack of competitive elections at the top and how it is a single party dictatorship are main reasons for Westerners

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13 While China has often been depicted as a place of tremendous chaos and poverty under Mao, it is important to point out that the Chinese economy under Mao did not experience negative economic growth. Even though there was the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, China was still able to experience six percent per capita income growth between 1952 to 1978 (Goodman, 1997: 253).
15 Meredith, 2007: 22.
viewing China with suspicion.\textsuperscript{17} In general, the lack of openness in China on political and military issues is a major problem and source of distrust the West and democracies, such as the US, Japan, and its neighbors, have with China.\textsuperscript{18} The other part of this concerns whether or not wants to be a responsible stakeholder or to provide an alternative model.

\textit{Different types of human rights}

There are two main categories regarding human rights: 1) political and civil rights; and 2) economic, cultural and social rights.\textsuperscript{19} Whereas Western states and INGOs, such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), emphasize political and civil rights, the Chinese government claims that it strongly emphasizes economic, cultural, and social rights, and that leads to a fundamental disagreement between China and the West. To provide an example of how the topic of human rights can become controversial and a gray area, regarding economic equality, the United States, which receives high marks on political and civil rights according to such human rights data sets as Freedom House, Polity IV, and CIRI, has a significant percentage of its population living in poverty. Thus, one could point to this, which the Chinese government does, as a fundamental flaw of the country that is highly regarded as having a very good human rights practice. Also, racism is another example in which the US performs poorly, and China seizes their opportunity and condemns racism.

\textsuperscript{17} Brownwell, 2008: 2.
\textsuperscript{18} See Yahuda, 2013: 456; Freidberg, 2005: 32, 42.
\textsuperscript{19} These two categories of human rights both fall under the umbrella of egalitarian rights, as egalitarian rights apply to everyone. Differential rights, however, mean that different people have different access to rights, e.g. Affirmative Action.
and discrimination in the US, which I will address in chapter six. Indeed, Chinese
government officials, specifically Chinese delegates at the UN and those in the
Chinese media, often point to these two issues—poverty and racism in the US—to
make the case that the US does not have a good human rights practice. Even though
the Chinese government claims that it is strongly committed to economic, cultural,
and social rights, it has done less well in actual practice. With the move towards
more privatization of the Chinese economy, the Chinese government laid off millions
of people from work, which was done in the name of embracing more of a market
approach. Such an approach, however, is not consistent with the notion of valuing
economic rights.20

The dissertation addresses both types of human rights. In chapter five, I
examine China’s voting on both types of human rights. In the chapter six, in which I
examine China’s voting on country-specific human rights resolutions, it is usually
about political and civil rights that are addressed in such UNGA resolutions, and
thus that chapter focuses on political and civil rights. In chapter six, in which I
provide a content analysis of statements by the Chinese delegates to the UN, the
statements focus on both of the two types of human rights, but the delegates are
explicit in that China views economic rights as the foundation for all rights. Finally,
in chapter seven, I focus on political and civil rights with the four case studies in that
chapter. In addition to focusing on both of the two main categories of human rights,
this dissertation focuses on the relationship between the perceived domestic threat
to CCP rule and China’s actions on such human rights issues in the UNGA. The topic

20 For more on this topic, see Kent, 2008.
of norm localization is relevant here. According to norm localization, accepting and advancing norms require domestic support as opposed to being imposed on a given country from outside. Since the Chinese government has long emphasized economic development as a norm, there is ample support for it in China, which is in stark contrast to the lack of support for political and civil rights.

**China’s emphasis on economic development instead of political and civil rights**

In speaking at the UN, Chinese government officials have repeatedly stated that physical needs (such as food, shelter, and other basic necessities) and development issues are much more pressing concerns than abstract notions of human rights based on civil and political rights.\(^{21}\) Thus, according to the CCP, political and civil rights can wait.\(^{22}\) In practice, however, the Chinese government does not seek to fully advance economic rights, as I pointed out above. Nonetheless, the Chinese government’s argument fits neatly with both rational choice’s emphasis that actors act in a manner to advance their preferences and with the Asian values argument, which also provides justification for the Chinese government’s main objective: remaining in power. Thus, the Chinese government uses the Asian values argument as a way to deflect potential threats to its rule on the issues of civil and political rights. Regarding poverty reduction and other quality of life indicators (such as life expectancy, number of years in school, and per capita GNI), China has achieved significant progress in recent decades. For example, according to UNDP

\(^{21}\) Chinese delegates to the UN have provided ample statements on the topic of how physical needs are more pressing than political rights. See the many statements on the following Chinese website: [http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rqwt/](http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rqwt/).

\(^{22}\) See Sceats and Breslin, 2012: 2.
data on the topic of “life expectancy at birth,” China went from 67.0 in 1980 to 75.3 in 2013. On the topic of “expected years of schooling,” China went from 8.4 years in 1980 to 12.9 years in 2013. Regarding “mean years of schooling,” China went from 3.7 years in 1980 to 7.5 years in 2013. A massive accomplishment was achieved in terms of GNI per capita (2011 PPP$), going from $690 in 1980 to $11,477 in 2013. Overall, the HDI value almost doubled for China, going from .423 in 1980 to .719 in 2013. Thus, human development conditions for many in China have improved dramatically in recent decades. 400 million Chinese have moved out of the $1 per day poverty level since 1978, and this is a major source of legitimacy for CCP rule.

According to the World Bank, from 1985 to 2010, the Chinese population accounted for 70 percent of the world’s population who rose out of poverty. Having said that, there are still 200 million Chinese living below $1.25 per day.

To put this massive poverty reduction into perspective, 60 percent of the Chinese people lived in extreme poverty in 1990. In 2005, only 16 percent of the people in China lived in poverty. Then, in 2010, it went down to 12 percent. China was the first developing country to reach the MDG target on poverty reduction.

China’s strong economic growth since 1978 is a main factor explaining why so many Chinese have moved out of poverty, with an annual GDP growth of 9.9 percent from 1978 to 2009. The economic growth and drop in poverty in China since the reform and opening in 1978 are unprecedented in the world. Today, China is a

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23 See 2014 Human Development Report
26 “China’s Progress Towards the MDGs 2010 Report,” 2010: 11; see also Wu and Cheng, 2010: 629.
middle-income country. In contrast to the near 10 percent GDP growth since the reform and opening, under Mao’s leadership from 1949-1976, GDP growth in China was half of what it has been in since Deng’s economic reforms, 4-5 percent annually. These are significant accomplishments of the Chinese government. However, there has not been widespread international recognition for this Chinese achievement in human development. As a result, the Chinese government is disappointed that China has not received the credit that the government feels it deserves from the international human rights regime for its massive reduction in poverty. After all, of the two main categories on human rights, economic issues and poverty are considered as one of the human rights categories, as stated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

It is important to emphasize that while both economic growth and poverty reduction in China have been very successful, China has been less successful in reducing economic inequality during this period of spectacular economic growth, as the rise in the Gini coefficient attests to that. China’s Gini coefficient has doubled since the reform and opening. Moreover, there is also a significant economic gap between rural and urban in China. Therefore, while tremendous progress has been achieved in China regarding poverty reduction and other human development indicators, there are still many economic areas that are in urgent need of development. But this has received attention in recent years by the Chinese government, as the Hu-Wen leadership embraced social spending and the desire for

more equitable per capita GDP growth rather than overall GDP growth. Under Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin, the Chinese government focused on overall (or macro) GDP growth—not per capita growth.

*Explanatory dimensions: 1) modernization theory; 2) sovereignty; 3) Asian values; 4) international pressure: A) economic sanctions and B) naming and shaming*

All of these approaches have received ample attention in the literature. In addition, states and non-state actors have also invoked such theories (such as the Chinese government using sovereignty as justification for its actions on human rights) when focusing on China’s human rights. While I provide a literature review on these four approaches in chapter three of this dissertation, in this section here I point out the strengths and weaknesses of the four approaches regarding China’s actions on human rights.

*Modernization theory*

Since modernization theory argues that as the economy develops, political development (i.e. an improvement in human rights) follows, there should be evidence of this in China, as China has experienced tremendous economic development in recent decades. However, with the chart that I provide below, we see how the massive increase in per capita GDP in China has not translated into an improvement in physical integrity rights (torture, extrajudicial killing, and political imprisonment). In China, per capita GDP increased sharply starting in 2005. However, it has been paralleled with a decrease—not an increase—in physical
integrity rights. In contrast to the data that I present on China’s dramatic per capita GDP growth in recent years, both GDP growth and democracy are considered in the literature as significant in improving human rights.

As demonstrated with the charts below, modernization theory is not coming to fruition in China. Therefore, this is a clear rebuke to modernization theory's argument that as a country prospers, political openness follows. Another chart provides data on the FDI China has received and physical integrity rights. Similar with the per capita GDP chart, there was also a sharp increase in FDI that China received at approximately the same time that per capita GDP in China made significant progress. Thus, neither the FDI nor the per capita increase has had a positive impact on physical integrity rights in China. In short, modernization theory does a poor job in explaining the human rights situation in China. Thus, for my research focus in this dissertation (what accounts for China’s actions in the UNGA on human rights?), modernization theory does not help in explaining why China has acted in the UNGA on human rights, nor does it explain China’s domestic human rights practice.

A stark comparison of physical integrity rights and economic development
Sources: CIRI dataset and World Bank

![Graph showing PHYSINT and FDI](image)
Sovereignty

The Chinese government has long-argued that issues occurring inside of China, especially human rights issues, are sovereign issues and thus the responsibility of the Chinese government—not of other states or transnational actors. However, the Chinese government has not been consistent regarding its stance and actions on sovereignty. Due to such inconsistencies by the Chinese government, sovereignty also does not fully explain why China acts in the UNGA on human rights issues. If China did respect sovereignty, as it says it does, it would have abstained on the UNGA votes in which Israel, the UK, and Portugal were denounced for violating the human rights of Palestinians for the case of Israel, and people in Africa for the cases of the UK and Portugal. Instead, the Chinese government decided to vote in the affirmative on such resolutions, and in the process, voted to denounce Western countries. Moreover, if China did respect sovereignty, China would not have issued such statements critical of the US on human rights in the UNGA.

Yet another example that demonstrates how China does not act consistently on sovereignty is with the Chinese government’s restructuring of its domestic
economy according to WTO and international trade regime requirements.

Regarding its participation in the international trade regime, China acquiesced on sovereignty issues. However, on human rights issues involving sovereignty, China has adamantly resisted changing domestic policies on human rights. In other words, regarding sovereignty, there are some instances in which China is more willing to work with international actors and standards and less willing in other cases.

Regarding human rights issues involving political and civil rights within China, there is significantly less likely a chance the Chinese government will initiate change because of the reasons stated in this dissertation: It is perceived as a threat to CCP rule or the potential break up of China, which draws upon rational choice’s emphasis that actors act in a manner to advance their preferences. In short, the sovereignty argument is of limited value in understanding the research question of this dissertation. For the Chinese government, there is a relationship between sovereignty and what it deems as it core interests, which is explored in the next section.

Core interests

The phrase and use of the term core interests is a recent development for Chinese foreign policy, starting circa 2005. In Chinese foreign policy, the term core interest was first used regarding Taiwan, for China views Taiwan as essential for China remaining one country and not losing territory. In 2006, the term core

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31 “China’s declaration of key interests misinterpreted,” 2013. See also Wong, 2015.
interest was then applied to both Tibet and Xinjiang. Prior to around 2011, the term was basically used for those three previously mentioned areas of paramount sensitivity and sovereignty for the Chinese government—Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang.

Now, the term core interests involve three areas that are off limits for any actors other than the CCP—1) the CCP must remain in power; 2) sovereignty and territory must be protected; and 3) developing the economy. In reflecting how the Chinese government has broadened the term, the South China Sea is now a core interest. Because the current Chinese definition of what constitutes an example of a core interest has evolved and broadened in recent years, this leaves the implications of China’s intentions and actions unclear. While President, Xi Jinping has invoked the phrase “core interests” often in his speeches at international gatherings. As China has ascended, the term has also broadened.

Asian Values

There has never been a leader of China elected by popular vote. Historically in China, the emphasis has been on hierarchy, obedience, stability, and the group, which are all essential in a Confucian system. The impact of Confucianism is still strong in China. The Confucian idea of hierarchy stands in stark contrast to Western

33 Wong, 2015.
34 Wong, 2015.
35 Wong, 2015.
36 Wong, 2015.
37 Wong, 2015.
38 Wong, 2015.
39 See Kwong, 2008: 4.
democracies. In the West, equality or a level playing field takes precedence over hierarchy. While rule of law is emphasized in the West, Confucianism emphasizes doing the right thing.\textsuperscript{40} Due to the factors stated above, China does not have a history of checks and balances or rule of law.\textsuperscript{41} Moreover, the Chinese government does not regard elections as a human right.

The Asian values argument has also been used to explain China’s approach to human rights, though in recent years it has been not as commonly used as it was prior to the 1997 Asian financial crisis. Supporters of the Asian values argument state that the urgent need for economic development must take priority over political development. Moreover, according to Asian values countries should respect other countries sovereignty. However, as I observed above with the Chinese statements it issued in the UNGA and with its voting in the UNGA, the Chinese government has been willing to admonish the US and other Western countries on human rights. Thus, the Asian values argument also does not adequately explain China’s approach to human rights in the UNGA. Regarding the emphasis on economic development, the Asian values argument does a good job in explaining China’s prioritizing economic development over political development. Overall, the Asian values argument is of limited value in understanding China’s actions on human rights in the UNGA.

\textit{International pressure: 1) economic sanctions and 2) naming and shaming}

\textsuperscript{40} See Hu, 2000: 61.
\textsuperscript{41} See Zhang, 2006:124.
As mentioned in the introduction, state and non-state actors have used these two aspects of international pressure (both economic sanctions and naming and shaming) with the intended aim of having China modify its actions on human rights issues. Those two mechanisms of applying international pressure have not resulted in China significantly modifying its actions on domestic human rights issues. Thus, the two have not been effective in bringing about change in China regarding human rights. Sanctions proved ineffective in the case of China in 1989 and the early 1990s due to the interest of many countries to trade with a robust Chinese economy. Naming and shaming has not been effective in having China modify its actions on human rights because the perceived threat to CCP rule is far more significant to the CCP than accommodating international calls for human rights. If the Chinese government were to acquiesce in international pressure on issues such as Tibet, Xinjiang, and Liu Xiaobo, that is perceived as threatening to the very existence of the CCP. However, if the naming and shaming is for an issue or area that is not perceived as threatening to CCP rule, such as China’s actions in Sudan, then the Chinese government is more inclined to slightly modify its actions if such modification is not threatening to CCP rule, which I point out in chapter six. Overall, because naming and shaming China has been ineffective in promoting human rights in China, it is of limited value in assessing China’s actions on human rights in the UNGA.

*Alternative explanation*
The main hypothesis put forward in this dissertation is that there is no discrepancy between China’s poor domestic human rights practice and its active international involvement in terms of Chinese perceptions and motivations. Even though China is active in the UNGA regarding human rights and has signed numerous international human rights treaties, it is domestic concerns, in particular the perceived threat level to CCP rule, that determines the CCP’s actions on human rights in the UNGA. My alternative explanation, which draws from rational choice’s emphasis that actors act to advance their preferences, focuses on the perceived threat to CCP rule and is manifested in two ways: 1) the role of the most sensitive core interests for the Chinese government, and 2) in the UNGA, despite its overall active voting record, China voted against human rights resolutions if the resolutions criticized a developing country’s government. As I pointed out in the section on core interests in this chapter, the CCP does not view all core interests with the same sense of potential threat, as international trade issues and human rights are not viewed in the same manner in terms of potential threat to CCP rule.

Conclusion

In the first section of this chapter, I placed the dissertation’s focus in the necessary context, by focusing on topics such as the 1) the East Asian context; 2) providing a snapshot of China’s role in the global economy; 3) the different types of human rights; and 4) China’s emphasis on economic development. Then, I identified the explanatory dimensions that currently exist in the literature and argued which pieces of those existing approaches are useful in understanding China’s actions on
human rights in the UNGA. Then, I put forward my alternative explanation in this dissertation, which uses rational choice to argue that it is the perceived threat to CCP rule that accounts for China’s actions on human rights. In the next chapter, I justify my methodological approach in the dissertation.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Research Design

Abstract

This dissertation seeks to combine useful elements of both quantitative and qualitative data sources (a mixed methods approach) for evaluating the topic of
China’s actions on human rights in the UN. In this chapter, I focus on the advantages of the sources that I use, as that is my added value in this dissertation. For my qualitative sources in this dissertation, I use case studies of particular events (Tibet in 2008, Xinjiang in 2009, Liu Xiaobo in 2010, and China’s actions regarding Darfur in the 2000s) and statements by Chinese delegates to the UN. For my quantitative sources, I use UNGA voting data. In addition to using the already existing UNGA voting data, I create a new dataset on China’s voting in the UNGA on human rights resolutions. For this dissertation, I am interested in establishing patterns on China’s actions on UNGA voting on human rights resolutions, statements in the UN on human rights, and with my case studies on China’s actions on human rights. Establishing such patterns will allow me to generalize when and why the Chinese government acts the way it does on such human rights issues, which I argue is best explained by rational choice’s emphasis that actors act in a manner to advance their preferences.

*Introduction*

Certain human rights topics regarding China have not received scholarly attention, such as: 1) a systematic empirical investigation of China’s voting in the UNGA on human rights issues; 2) an in-depth examination of China’s voting in the UNGA on country-specific resolutions regarding human rights; 3) an examination of statements from Chinese officials on human rights issues in the UNGA; and 4) an investigation of when China will and will not modify its actions on human rights issues regarding international pressure. This dissertation focuses on China’s actions
(both voting and statements) in the UNGA on human rights issues. Thus, this dissertation makes new contributions to the topic of China’s actions on human rights. The main chapters of this dissertation focus on the stated topics from both from a quantitative approach and a qualitative approach (or a mixed methods approach).

Regarding qualitative data sources, it has been my goal to interview Chinese delegates to the UN. Conducting such interviews with Chinese delegates would allow me the opportunity to examine why China has voted the way it has on such resolutions that I study in this dissertation. Moreover, with such interviews I was planning on asking questions to elicit responses that would reveal the Chinese government’s views on human rights in the UNGA. Unfortunately, despite calling the Chinese delegation to the UN many times and emailing many people there, I have been unable to find any one at that office who is willing to speak with me about this topic. When I attended a UN session in November 2014, I approached two members of the Chinese delegation and told them that I am researching China's actions in the UN for my dissertation and would like to arrange some interviews. (I did not tell them that I am focusing on human rights, as I was concerned that would have been perceived with suspicion by the two delegates.) Those two individuals provided me with their business cards, but they never responded to my numerous emails or calls. In addition, I approached the US delegation and asked to interview US officials. I called and emailed the people who provided me with their business cards, and it was the same situation for them: they never responded to my calls or emails. Thus, I recognize that a shortcoming of this dissertation is the lack of
interviews with the Chinese delegation to the UN. Interviewing such people would have certainly added value to this dissertation. Since I have been unable to secure any interviews with them, I have to rely on the data that is available. In addition to contacting Chinese delegates and US delegates, I have tried contacting various human rights NGOs, such as Human Rights in China, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and Freedom House, but I was unable to speak with anyone at those NGOs about this topic. While interviewing such people would have certainly added value to the dissertation, the dissertation is not fundamentally flawed without being able to interview such people. In fact, this dissertation has added value to the literature. Because my argument identifies when China will and will not modify its action on human rights, this dissertation has policy implications. As such, this dissertation is relevant for both state and non-state actors, such as transnational activists, members of IOs, and INGOs in their interactions with China. In the future, I intend to return to the PRC to conduct fieldwork on this topic.

Justification for my mixed methods approach and the debate over sources:

quantitative-qualitative divide

Scholars have debated which methodological sources (qualitative or quantitative) are more useful in research methods on political science issues. Some staunchly argue that qualitative sources are better, and some argue that quantitative sources are better. In justifying my selection of qualitative and

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42 I contacted a former Peace Corps colleague who now works for that NGO and she told me that HRC is very limited with staff and cannot even respond to journalists’ questions about human rights issues in China.
quantitative data sources (or my mixed methods approach), I examine the literature on this topic and explain why I use such sources.

In general, a case study aims to focus on an event or a series of events to convey something much larger. John Gerring provides the following definition of a case study: “as an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units.”\(^{43}\) Andrew Bennett states the following regarding the advantages and disadvantages of case studies, “case studies involve a trade-off between generalizability and specificity.”\(^{44}\) With the quantitative data that I use, however, I am able to generalize the results to identify patterns. With the case studies that I use, I focus on specific results or examples. Bennett’s statement also adequately reflects my interest in this dissertation's methodological approach: “Case study researchers are usually more interested in finding out the conditions under which specified outcomes occur and the mechanisms through which they occur than the frequency with which those conditions and their outcomes arise.”\(^{45}\)

Some scholars loathe case studies are others laud case studies. Scholars who are critical of case studies argue that case studies may not adequately reflect a particular argument or theory. The selection process (or selecting certain cases based on the dependent variable) is often pointed to as a potential problem with case studies. On this point, Bennett states that potential drawbacks of case studies are “the problem of case selection and the danger of selection bias.”\(^{46}\) Sidney Tarrow also echoes the legitimate criticism regarding case studies: “Case studies

\(^{43}\) 2004: 341.
\(^{44}\) 2004: 43.
\(^{45}\) 2004: 43.
\(^{46}\) 2004: 19.
have been validly criticized as often being based on dramatic but frequently unrepresentative cases.”

While Tarrow uses the term “triangulation” to describe how to combine both quantitative and qualitative research methods, I use the term mixed methods. Tarrow’s view of using such mixed methods or “triangulation” is indeed appropriate for my topic in this dissertation: “Triangulation is particularly appropriate in cases in which quantitative data are partial and qualitative investigation is obstructed by political conditions.” Regarding my dissertation, it appears that political conditions hindered my ability to secure interviews for the qualitative aspect that I mentioned previously. Also, since I recognize that the UNGA voting data that I examine is limited in terms of taking into account China’s intent with such voting, I wanted to conduct interviews to find out more information about China’s voting, but that has not been possible. Since I have tried to interview Chinese delegates to the UN on this topic but have not found a receptive audience, conducting qualitative (specifically interviews) research has been a major obstacle in furthering this dissertation.

I operate from the view that both quantitative data and qualitative data have strengths and weaknesses. As Odell observes: “Statistics compensate for the shortcomings of case studies, and case studies offset the weaknesses of statistics.” I follow Tarrow’s suggestion with the following: “Whenever possible, we should use qualitative data to interpret quantitative findings, to get inside the processes

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47 2004: 175.
50 2004: 74.
underlying decision outcomes, and to investigate the reasons for the tipping points in historical time-series.”51 In also justifying my mixed methods approach in this dissertation, I point to Van Evera’s argument on the following: “large-\(n\) methods tell us more about whether hypotheses hold than why they hold.”52 Case studies, however, offer insight as to why.53 Since I am interested in the why aspect, I examine Chinese statements in the UN on human rights and examine four case studies in chapter seven. Interviews would have been very helpful in offering insight to the why component of China’s actions on human rights in the UNGA, but that is not possible for this dissertation.

Regarding quantitative data sets, some have questioned the validity of such data sets, especially data generated from authoritarian governments such as the Chinese government. Having said that, sometimes there is no other data source available, and thus if one aims to use data, there are not many other options. However, since the data that I examine is from China’s voting in the UNGA on human rights resolutions, the data on voting is more transparent than data on, say, poverty reduction. It is the combination of quantitative data sources and qualitative data sources that I use (and create with a new human rights data set on votes in the UNGA) that is the added value of this dissertation.

Theory testing

51 2004: 179.
52 Van Evera, 1997: 55.
Regarding theory testing, I test the four approaches stated in the introduction (Asian values, sovereignty, international pressure, and modernization theory) regarding China’s actions on human rights. Since those four approaches are not adequate in explaining China’s actions on human rights, I develop an argument on this topic by using rational choice. Using rational choice, I argue that it is the perceived threat to CCP rule that accounts for China’s actions on human rights. This pattern is manifested in both the quantitative and qualitative data sources of this dissertation: China’s voting in the UNGA, its statements on human rights in the UN, and the case studies that I explore in chapter six. Since this dissertation is largely exploratory, as this topic has neither been researched before nor is well-defined, I recognize that this is in the initial stage of such research questions.

IR Theories/Approaches and China

In this dissertation, I examine both IR theories and approaches and their relevance for the topic of my dissertation. Since I focus on China’s actions on human rights in the UNGA, it is important to place my focus in the larger context of the IR debate. For China’s actions on this topic, where does China fit in terms of both IR theories and approaches? Realism (with its many different types of realist thinking), liberalism, constructivism, and rational choice have all been used to explain China’s actions in IR. In this dissertation, I make the case that China operates based on what it perceives as the threat level to its existence. In other words, the Chinese government, in aiming to advance its preferences, makes
calculated cost-benefit analysis in its actions on human rights in the UNGA and with the case studies explored in this dissertation.

Regarding constructivism, while the Chinese government has been using human rights language and signing international human rights instruments, it has not become rhetorically entrapped.\textsuperscript{54} Even though the Chinese government inserted the phrase “human rights” into the 2004 Constitution, it has not resulted in any significant damages or pro-human rights changes. Thus, we have not, as of the time of this dissertation, witnessed China implementing change because of the words or language it has used regarding political and civil rights. Nonetheless, constructivism is useful for examining other non-human rights topics in Chinese IR. While other non-human rights cases suggest that China is learning from its engagement with IOs,\textsuperscript{55} in the realm of human rights actions, it does not appear that case at all.

I largely agree with Alastair Iain Johnston’s take on Chinese IR as stated in his 2008 book, \textit{Social States}. Johnston, a leading China scholar and who has perhaps made the strongest case for constructivism for several cases of Chinese IR, argues that on issues of international significance, the Chinese government made calculations, or cost-benefit analysis, as to what would be better thing to do overall—go along with a treaty or reject it?\textsuperscript{56} This is essentially the argument that I advance in this dissertation: the Chinese government acts to advance its

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Rhetorical entrapment, which is emphasized in the constructivist literature on human rights, is the argument that if state actors take ownership of human rights issues or language, whether by signing treaties or by publicly committing themselves to human rights, then that allows for activists to hold such leaders accountable, as the state actors have claimed they are committed to human rights. Thus, such leaders become trapped and need to make concessions on human rights. For more on this, see Thomas, 1999 and 2005.
\item See Johnston, 2008.
\item 2008: 150.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
preferences. Based on my examination of China’s voting in the UNGA, its statements issued in the UN, and with the case studies, I also reach the conclusion that the Chinese government makes calculated and cost-benefit analysis decisions on: 1) voting for such human rights resolutions, 2) its statements and 3) the reaction to events inside of China on human rights. As I argue throughout this dissertation by using rational choice, the Chinese government has acted in a manner that advances its preferences in the UNGA based on what it perceives as domestic threats to its rule.

Regarding the human rights issues that I explore in this dissertation, the primary objective of the Chinese government is to maintain its power. After all, this is what the CCP aims for generally. Deng Xiaoping and other CCP rulers clearly stated that in order for the CCP to stay in power, they must achieve strong economic growth and have certain policies. Thus, it is clear that the preservation of power is central to CCP rule. While rational choice is very useful in explaining China’s approach to human rights, in that China aims to advance its preferences than the learning aspect or socialization of constructivism or liberalism’s emphasis on cooperation, rational choice does less well in explaining China’s interest in advancing such soft power initiatives as Confucius Institutes throughout the world and the massive amount the government spent on mega events such as the 2008 Olympic Games and the 2010 Shanghai Expo.

Even though I use rational choice in this dissertation to explain China’s actions on human rights, I acknowledge that rational choice does less well explaining other areas of Chinese IR that are not explored in this dissertation, such
as China’s soft power initiatives. Indeed, Chinese IR is complex and certain IR theories and approaches offer better explanations in certain circumstances than others regarding Chinese IR. Overall, I argue that rational choice, with its emphasis on actors acting to advance their interests, is the IR approach that most adequately explains China’s actions on human rights in this dissertation.

*The Quantitative Approach*

Given that many scholars who focus on either human rights abuses or voting in the UNGA use quantitative data, I seek to engage scholars from that community in this dissertation. All too often China scholars are accused of not engaging the broader discipline of political science and limiting their focus to China. In this dissertation, I aim to engage IR, comparative politics, IO (UN), and human rights scholars. The quantitative component of my dissertation aims to do just that.

**UNGA data sources and my creation of a UNGA human rights data set**

Regarding my examination of UNGA resolutions, I used Erik Voeten’s database on the UNGA roll call data from 1946 to 2012.\(^{57}\) While examining the title of the UNGA resolutions, I identified the subset of UNGA resolutions that contained a human rights component since 1971. Given that the PRC became a member of the UN in 1971, I started my examination of the PRC’s votes in that year. Voeten’s data set on UNGA voting ends in 2012, and thus I do not have any voting analysis beyond that year. In addition to Voeten’s database, I also used the UN’s database on UNGA

\(^{57}\) [https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=hdl:1902.1/12379](https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=hdl:1902.1/12379)
resolutions,\textsuperscript{58} which I used to read each UNGA resolution that is used for this dissertation. Voeten’s data set does not contain the entire UNGA resolution. Instead, Voeten’s data set provides the year, title of the UNGA resolution, and a brief description of the resolution. Since I wanted to make sure the resolution was indeed about human rights, I read the entire resolution on the UN’s database. In total, I selected 704 such UNGA resolutions from 1971 to 2012. Based on my reading of every individual UNGA resolution in this study, I found that for all the UNGA human rights resolutions examined in this study, a “yes” vote was to vote in the affirmative on such human rights resolutions. The length of such UNGA resolutions varied, but generally each resolution was anywhere from several paragraphs to several pages. Thus, in total, I read through well over one thousand pages for all of the resolutions that I examine in this dissertation. Again, the focus here is on China’s voting behavior on UNGA resolutions that contain human rights components and not on supporting human rights in general.

I have provided below the categories and the data set that I created for China’s voting on UNGA resolutions that contain a human rights component. In my data set, I provide a category of human rights, the title of the resolution, and the year of the resolution. I divided these UNGA resolutions into six categories: 1) a broad category addressing human rights in general; this category of human rights resolutions contained the key word “human rights” or “right to” in the title of a resolution; 2) physical integrity rights; 3) freedom of travel; 4) electoral self-determination; 5) freedom of religion; and 6) women’s rights. These categories

\textsuperscript{58} \url{http://www.un.org/documents/resga.htm}
comprised the vast majority of the categories shown in the CIRI data.\textsuperscript{59} By providing a list of categories on such UNGA resolutions, I am following the precedent that Voeten established.\textsuperscript{60} In fact, Voeten also created a category that he labeled “human rights” UNGA resolutions regarding his scholarship on UNGA voting.\textsuperscript{61} Both Voeten’s data set and his articles that use his data set have been widely cited in the literature on UNGA voting.

Below I provide the title of the UNGA resolutions that I examine and the year in which the resolutions were voted on.

**Category 1: Human rights in general**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of resolution</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chile, Trust Fund</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil, Political Rights</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission on human rights</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition for the staff of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of Human Rights</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Human Rights</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up..fact-finding mission on Gaza conflict</td>
<td>2009, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic distribution, human rights committee</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{59} The Cingranelli and Richards (CIRI) data set examines states human rights practice from 1981 to 2011. I will explain this in more detail in the next section.
\textsuperscript{60} See Voeten, 2004.
\textsuperscript{61} See Voeten, 2004.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Votes/Periods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights, Armed Conflicts</td>
<td>3 votes in 1972, 2 votes in 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights, Belarus</td>
<td>2006, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights, Bolivia</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights, Future Approach</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights, High Commissioner</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights, Improvements</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights, international cooperation</td>
<td>1996, 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights, mental health</td>
<td>1978, 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights, occupied Kuwait</td>
<td>1990, 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights, Syria</td>
<td>2011, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights, UN system</td>
<td>2003, 2004, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Covenants on Human Rights</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Tribunal—former Yugoslavia, Financing</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the</td>
<td>2003, 2004, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and mental health</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of human rights</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Intolerance</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism, fight against</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism, world conference</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist Regimes</td>
<td>1979, 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repression of Africans</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration of the rights of membership of Libya in the</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of resolution</td>
<td>Year(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of the Human Rights Council</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to Housing</td>
<td>1986, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights of Peoples to Peace</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social, economic, political rights</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa, Assistance</td>
<td>1988, 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa, Inalienable Rights</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa, Regime Effects</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The human right to water and sanitation</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The human rights situation arising from the recent Israeli military operations in Lebanon</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Education and Training Program</td>
<td>1971, 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-Being of populations</td>
<td>2 votes in 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Group on the Commission on Human Rights</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Category 2: Freedom of religion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of resolution</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Category 3: Women’s rights**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of resolution</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crimes against women</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decade for Women</td>
<td>1975, 1980, 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of Mexico</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Category 4: Freedom of self-determination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of resolution</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anguilla</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean Territories</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decolonization, Information</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti, self-determination</td>
<td>1975, 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing the role of...in promoting and consolidating democracy</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence, Colonial Countries</td>
<td>2 votes in 1972, 2 votes in 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Installations</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue and Tokelau Islands</td>
<td>1971, 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue, Self-Determination</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Territories</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan, self-determination</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese Territories</td>
<td>1972, 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 5: Physical integrity rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title of resolution</strong></td>
<td><strong>Year(s)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile, Political Disappearances</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death Penalty</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executions, Arbitrary</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Category 6: Freedom of travel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of resolution</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International migration and development</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CIRI data set

In this dissertation, I am interested in comparing how China voted in the UNGA on human rights issues with its domestic practice on similar human rights issues. Is it the case that the Chinese government acts in a similar manner with its domestic practice on human rights? Is there a relationship between China’s voting in the UNGA, its statements in the UN on human rights, its reaction to the case studies explored, and its domestic practice? To answer this question, I use the Cingranelli and Richards (CIRI) data set on China’s domestic human rights practice.

The CIRI dataset, which examines human rights on 195 countries from 1981 to 2011, is about states and human rights—not actions by non-state actors regarding human rights. The CIRI dataset has data on the following four categories: 1) physical integrity rights; 2) civil rights and liberties; 3) workers’ rights; and 4) women’s rights. More specifically, it has the following detailed categories measuring a state’s practice on human rights: disappearance, extrajudicial killing,
political imprisonment, torture, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of
domestic movement, freedom of foreign movement, freedom of speech, electoral
self-determination, freedom of religion, workers’ rights, women’s rights, and
independent judiciary. The CIRI dataset is arguably the leading and most
comprehensive dataset on states practice on human rights, and a great deal of
studies have used it to examine human rights.62 Another very popular dataset, the
Political Terror Scale (PTS), also provides data on human rights abuses and
examines both state and non-state actors on human rights abuses. Although the PTS
dataset uses the same sources as the CIRI dataset, which are the US State
Department and Amnesty International, it is not as detailed in categories as the CIRI
dataset.

Regarding the CIRI data set, Hafner-Burton and Ron point out that there are
legitimate criticisms with it. The coding is a legitimate concern about the limitations
of the CIRI data set, as the coding is sometimes difficult to grapple with. For
example, Iraq, Turkey, India, and Sudan all received a 0 (zero) score in the 1990s by
the CIRI data set. The abuses in those four countries in reality were very different,
and yet those countries received the same score.63 PTS has the same problem.
Hafner-Burton and Ron point out a flaw of PTS’ coding when they state that PTS
provided a score of 5 to all of the following countries: Indonesia in 2004, Cambodia
in 1976, Algeria in 2003, and Rwanda in 1994. Cambodia and Rwanda had mass
killings (genocide in Rwanda) in 1976 and 1994, respectively. But with Indonesia

62 Hafner-Burton 2008; Boockmann and Dreher 2011; Murdie and Davis 2012; Ausderan 2014.
63 Hafner-Burton and Ron, 2009: 381.
and Algeria in 2004 and 2003 the levels of violence were significantly less.\textsuperscript{64}

Nonetheless, all four countries received the same 5 point score from PTS. “In the CIRI data set,” Hafner-Burton and Ron argue, “a country has about a one in three chance of getting better, getting worse, or staying the same from one year to the next; the improvements that do take place, however, are relatively small steps.”\textsuperscript{65}

While these criticisms should be taken seriously, there are not many other options for scholars who wish to use data on human rights practice.

Since the goal is to make UNGA data comparable with the CIRI dataset, I selected the UNGA human rights resolutions that can find counterparts in the CIRI data. As mentioned previously, China’s domestic human rights practice measured by the CIRI data is among the lowest scores in the world. In the CIRI dataset, China received the worst possible score on many of the categories over the period 1981 to 2011. Based on the same categories, however, China’s voting behavior in the UNGA presents a strikingly different picture. In this dissertation, I examined each of the six identified categories. The category on human rights in general consisted of 418 resolutions, making it the largest number of resolutions of all of the categories. One example from this category was: "human rights situation in Kosovo." Another category was women’s rights, which included 18 UNGA resolutions. One example read: “convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.”\textsuperscript{66} This category corresponded to women’s political, economic, and social rights in the CIRI data.

\textsuperscript{64} 2009: 381. \\
\textsuperscript{65} 2009: 382. \\
My qualitative approach

For my qualitative approach, I use ample Chinese publications by Chinese journalists, scholars, and other significant PRC experts published in the Chinese news network Xinhua. I also examine documents from INGOs such as Human Rights Watch. In addition to the previously mentioned qualitative sources that I use, my main Chinese source for the qualitative approach is the set of statements or primary documents (80 statements in total from the years 2000 to 2014) by Chinese delegates to the UN, which is provided on a China-UN website. Those statements are unedited and offer a unique view as to how the Chinese government talks about human rights at the UN. Thus, this offers a window into how the Chinese government speaks about human rights in one of the most important international organizations in the world. No other scholar has examined this set of 80 documents in such a manner.

For my case studies, I focus on four non-trivial events in which the Chinese government received ample international pressure regarding human rights issues—1) Darfur from 2004 to 2008; 2) Tibet in 2008; 3) Xinjiang in 2009; and 4) Liu Xiaobo in 2010. These four cases adequately illustrate the issue of the threat level to CCP rule. For three of those events, the Chinese government strongly resisted international pressure, as acquiescing in such calls for change in Tibet and Xinjiang and allowing for a pro-democracy activist such as Liu Xiaobo are perceived by the Chinese government as very threatening to CCP rule. In other words, the Chinese

government acted according to its preference of remaining in power, which is explained by rational choice. With the case of Darfur, however, the Chinese government modified its position after strategically calculating that it was not as pressing of a threat to CCP rule as the other three events. Having said that, the Chinese government still did not act in a manner that Western states and Western NGOs were aiming for with Darfur in terms of humanitarian support for Darfur. Nonetheless, it was a significant change in Chinese policy. Those four cases adequately demonstrate how the Chinese acted in a manner to advance their preferences.

My section on Xinjiang in that chapter draws extensively from my previous research and publications on the topic of Xinjiang. In particular, I draw extensively from my 2013 article in which I examine and obtain my findings from Chinese newspapers, news organizations, former PRC dissidents, and activists.

Selecting these four events as the observations allows for variance with the dependent variable (i.e. positive change in China’s actions) in the case of Darfur. In other words, by including the case of Darfur, we see a different outcome by China’s actions. This allows us to isolate when it is and under what circumstances we can expect to see China resist international calls for change and thus be willing to incur damage to its international image. The dependent variable is China’s action on the human rights issues after international pressure was directed at China. While we do see variance with the dependent variable on China’s actions regarding Darfur, we should not expect to see China being on the same page as Western states regarding

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68 See Primiano, 2013.
action in Darfur. It should not be expected that China would support the concept of the “responsibility to protect” or R2P, which calls for international action to prevent mass atrocities.\(^69\) We should, nonetheless, expect more cooperation on issues such as Darfur than issues such as Tibet or Xinjiang or on the CCP changing its policy regarding dissidents, such as Liu Xiaobo, who pose a threat to CCP rule.

Given that all three of the domestic cases that I selected (Tibet in 2008; Xinjiang in 2009; and Liu Xiaobo in 2010) were top news stories for their specific year, it is important to assess the relationship between those cases and the Chinese government’s perceived threat to CCP rule. The way the Chinese government reacted to these cases reveals the main argument of this dissertation: using rational choice, I argue that the Chinese government acts to advance its preferences according to the domestic threat level to CCP rule. By examining such case studies, I reveal under what conditions the Chinese government does X and when it does Y regarding the relationship between human rights issues and the perceived threat to CCP rule. Regarding international pressure (i.e. naming and shaming) on human rights issues, I examine when the Chinese government will resist or modify its policies or actions. Thus, chapter seven identifies when we should expect more cooperation and when we should not expect cooperation regarding Chinese actions on human rights. My case studies therefore have much relevance for both state and non-state actors aiming to advance human rights in China.

Using rational choice, I argue that the Chinese government is willing to incur costs to its international image because of its tremendous fear of the country being

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\(^{69}\) Sarah Teitt has written extensively on China’s stance on R2P. See, for example, [http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/files/China_and_R2P%5B1%5D.pdf](http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/files/China_and_R2P%5B1%5D.pdf)
broken up, with Xinjiang and Tibet becoming independent, and with the end of CCP rule, with the case of Liu Xiaobo.\textsuperscript{70} Thus, under these conditions (the threat of losing territory or the threat to CCP rule), we can expect the Chinese government to strongly resist international pressure on human rights and incur damage to its international image. In other words, the Chinese government’s main concern is to remain in power and acts according to that preference, even if that means incurring significant damage to its international image.

Because the Chinese government does not want any part of China breaking off, the Chinese government is very sensitive to any potential calls for allowing more autonomy and progressive action in places such as Tibet and Xinjiang. This explains why the Chinese government reacts the way it does to international calls for action in such provinces and with activists such as Liu Xiaobo, who is viewed as wanting to bring an end to CCP rule. These three cases clearly demonstrate how the Chinese government is willing to incur damage to its international image instead of heeding international calls for action.

The events examined in this chapter all received significant attention in China and internationally, and thus were not trivial events. According to a Xinhua article in which over one million Chinese Internet users chose the top 10 world and domestic events of 2008, the Tibetan riots was listed as a top 10 domestic event.\textsuperscript{71} For, “Xinhua’s top 10 news events of 2009,” “Resolving the July 5 riot in Urumqi”

\textsuperscript{70} This issue of the threat of China breaking up regarding Tibet and Xinjiang has been stated by Chinese government officials in many press conferences the Chinese Foreign Ministry has had.

\textsuperscript{71} “Chinese netizens pick top 10 domestic, world news event of 2008.”
was ranked third out of ten. In 2010, *Time* listed Liu Xiaobo as "people who mattered" for that year. Given that all three cases were selected as top news stories for their specific year, it is important to assess the way the Chinese government reacted to international criticism. This reveals the extent to which the government is concerned the perceived threat to CCP rule and thus is unwilling to act on human rights issues.

These three topics (Tibet, Xinjiang, and Liu Xiaobo) allow one to compare the stark contrast between China’s voting in the UNGA on comparable issues with its domestic practice, which is my focus in chapter seven. In contrast to the many non-binding resolutions that China voted in the affirmative on in the UNGA, chapter seven focuses on concrete actions that the Chinese government implemented or refused to implement regarding human rights issues in Tibet, Xinjiang, Darfur, and with a prominent dissident, Liu Xiaobo. The cases of Tibet and Xinjiang, which involve oppressed minority groups, offer a stark contrast to China’s voting in the affirmative on comparable issues in the UNGA. The case of Liu Xiaobo offers the opportunity to compare China’s voting in the UNGA on self-determination issues and elections with its practice and treatment of activists at home, such as Liu Xiaobo.

*Conclusion of chapter 2*

In this chapter, I have made the case for why I am using a mixed methods approach, as both qualitative and quantitative data sources have value. An

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72 “Xinhua’s top ten news events of 2009.”
73 “Person of the Year 2010.”
examination of China’s voting on human rights resolutions in the UNGA, which has heretofore not been explored by any other scholar, is significant in terms of understanding the relationship between China’s voting in the UNGA on such resolutions and its perceived threat to CCP rule. Also, I explained the data set that I created regarding China’s voting in the UNGA on human rights resolutions. Even though I was unable to attain interviews for this dissertation, which would have added more value, the dissertation still makes contributions to the scholarship on this topic. Because the sources that I use in this dissertation allow me to obtain findings on the relationship between Chinese government actions and the threat level to CCP rule, this dissertation has much relevance for a number of different types of scholars: 1) scholars interested in IOs (specifically the UN); 2) China scholars; and 3) human rights scholars. Additionally, there is much relevance for human rights activists and other actors (both state and non-state) aiming to bring about change regarding China’s actions on human rights. In short, it is the sources that I use in this dissertation that constitute my added value. Both the quantitative data and the qualitative data reveal the same pattern of this dissertation: using rational choice, I argue that the Chinese government makes calculated decisions to advance its preferences on the human rights issues explored in this dissertation. Since the Chinese government’s main preference is to remain in power, and is thus very concerned about any potential threat to CCP rule, it acts based on such perceived threat levels to its rule.
Chapter 3: Literature review on IR theories/approaches and explanatory dimensions

Abstract

Since the main argument in this dissertation is that the Chinese government’s perceived domestic threat to CCP rule determines the way the Chinese government acts on human rights issues in the UNGA, this chapter provides a necessary literature review on both IR theories and the four main explanatory dimensions that have been used to explain China’s approach to human rights—Asian values;
sovereignty; modernization theory; international pressure: 1) economic sanctions and 2) naming and shaming. In this chapter, I integrate the four-above mentioned explanatory dimensions with the main IR theories that they are associated with.

**IR Theories and human rights**

**I. Realism**

After World War II (WWII), realism dominated the debate in IR. Realism, which Rathbun regards as “the oldest and most dominant approach to international relations theory,”74 reached its apex during the Cold War. For realists, the desire to acquire power and the balance of power are the main issues in international politics. Hans Morgenthau sums up the balance of power as the following: “This aspiration for power on the part of several nations, each trying either to maintain or overthrow the status quo, leads of necessity to a configuration that is called the balance of power and to policies that aim at preserving it.”75 However, the world has changed significantly since Morgenthau originally wrote his classic book in 1948. In reflecting the realist approach, until recent decades, the focus in IR was all about great powers—not about human security or human rights. Since the end of the Cold War, however, ethics has played a large role in IR, which demonstrates that realism is losing ground. At the end of the Cold War, a normative approach, or an examination of proper actions, emerged. The normative approach’s focus on proper actions therefore is a challenge to the realist emphasis on maximizing power by any means necessary. Whereas realism argues that politics has its own ethics, and

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74 Rathbun, 2010: 3.
ethics should not be considered in wartime, the normative approach argues that there is no neutrality on ethics in IR, as there is always a choice to be made. For realists, the main issues in wartime are power and protecting the country. As stated above, realists view power as the main objective in IR. Realists became neo-realists by paying attention to ethics.

Regarding China’s approach to human rights and realist theory, realism may explain China’s self-interest in advancing itself in IR on human rights issues, but the realist emphasis, usually associated with offensive realism, that rising powers seek to fundamentally change the existing system holds less well in assessing China’s actions in the UNGA on human rights. On this topic of arguing against the realist notion that a rising power would seek to alter the international system, Borzel’s findings are significant for the case of China. Borzel offers an alternative view to the realist emphasis on rising states seeking to alter the international system. According to Borzel, China is acting in a strategic manner to secure its interests instead of acting in a manner to fundamentally change the international system.76

This is applicable to my argument about the Chinese government’s actions on human rights by using rational choice’s emphasis that actors act in a manner to advance their preferences. According to Borzel, “China’s indifference towards EU and US democracy promotion in Sub-Sahara Africa and Myanmar confirms the finding that illiberal regional powers do not take issue with Western democracy promotion as long as their strategic interests are not at stake.”77 In other words, the Chinese government’s main concern is to remain in power and acts according to that

76 See Borzel, 2015.
77 2015: 522.
preference. Since the Chinese government does not view the West’s push for
democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa and Myanmar as a threat to its existence, the
Chinese government does not act to counter Western actions.

Jonathan Kirshner, a leading classical realist, offers a view that is very
relevant to the argument of this dissertation: “there is no good reason to believe that
if China is a rational actor motivated primarily to survive, it would embark upon a
bid for hegemony.”

Charles Glaser, who is associated with defensive realism and
states that he uses defensive realism’s focus on rational choice, provides a view that
is similar with Kirshner as opposed to Mearsheimer on China in general. In a recent
article, Glaser argued that the US should work out a deal with China that the US will
not defend Taiwan in a confrontation with China. In exchange for the US doing so,
China would have to agree to “peacefully resolve its maritime and land disputes in
the South China and East China Seas, and officially accept the United States’ long-
term military security role in East Asia.” This is what Glaser calls a “grand
bargain.” In short, defensive realism views the international system as providing
the environment for states to act in a manner that is consistent with good
behavior. This is thus in stark contrast to Mearsheimer’s view and offensive
realism in general. Mearsheimer and other offensive realists do not espouse
defensive realism’s emphasis on rational choice, which provides for a stark contrast
between the two competing realist theories.

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78 2010: 64.
79 2015: 50.
80 2015: 50.
81 See Glaser 2015: 52-54.
Indeed, China demonstrated that it was not interested in cooperation on the human rights issues that I examine as case studies in this dissertation, which may be explained by the realist emphasis on conflict over cooperation. While the realist emphasis on states seeking to advance themselves certainly seems to be the case with China’s actions on human rights in the UNGA, overall, however, since it appears that China is not focused on fundamentally changing the existing international system on human rights, it appears that realism has its limits in explaining China’s actions on human rights in the UNGA.

A. Sovereignty

The Chinese government has used the issue of sovereignty to justify its actions on human rights issues, both domestically and abroad. The Chinese government has argued that since it respects sovereignty, it is unwilling to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries regarding issues related to human rights. However, as I argue in the chapters in which I examine China’s voting on country specific human rights resolutions and its statements on human rights, China does criticize the United States, Israel, and other Western countries on human rights. Thus, it is not accurate for the Chinese government to state that it does not get involved in other countries domestic affairs, as its voting to criticize human rights by Israel and its statements denouncing the US on human rights demonstrate that China is willing to get involved in the domestic affairs of other countries. However,

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82 For Chinese government statements on sovereignty and how the Chinese government states that it respects the sovereignty of other states regarding human rights issues, see the ample statements by Chinese representatives to the UN on the following website: [http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rqwt/](http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rqwt/)
China does not criticize developing countries regarding human rights, as will be observed in the main chapters of this dissertation.

According to the Asian values argument, since Asian countries, and thus China, are different from Western countries regarding cultural issues, the West is not justified in seeking to advance its ideas of human rights in China. The Chinese government therefore has shifted the debate on human rights and utilized the sovereignty argument to claim that foreigners have no right to intrude in Chinese domestic politics. ASEAN’s emphasis on sovereignty reassures China that there is no domestic threat to China for its participation in the IO.

In the 1990s, the ascendancy of humanitarian intervention changed the way sovereignty is viewed. The Chinese government is very cautious about humanitarian intervention, especially the idea of the responsibility to protect (R2P). For example, in China’s involvement with resolving the issue in Darfur, China insisted that the Sudanese government had to sign off on the UN’s actions in Darfur in order for international action to occur, which clearly reflects the PRC’s emphasis on the relationship between human rights and sovereignty. Domestically in China, the Chinese government states that both Tibet and Xinjiang involve Chinese sovereignty, and thus the Chinese government rejects international criticism of its handling of those provinces. However, on the issue of sovereignty, the Chinese government has not been completely consistent, as it is willing to restrict its own

84 See Beeson and Li, 2012: 43
85 For more on this point of Chinese economic interests in Sudan and how the Chinese government maintained economic ties, see Patey, 2014.
86 Zhu and Blachford, 2005: 243, 248
sovereignty on some issues (such as WTO regulations) but not on issues in which it is perceived as threatening to CCP rule. The Chinese government uses the sovereignty issue to achieve political objectives. For example, sovereignty can be compromised regarding WTO issues but not with human rights issues that may potentially lead to the end of CCP rule. Thus, sovereignty also does not fully explain China’s approach to human rights.

B. Core Interests

As mentioned previously, not all core interests are viewed equally. Since that is the case, the Chinese government has demonstrated significant variance in terms of its actions on core interests. In terms of Chinese response to international pressure on what it deems as core interests, the Chinese government is more willing to work with or accept international opinion on certain core interests than others. On issues of trade and joining the WTO, as pointed out in the previous section, China has been more willing to cooperate internationally and modify its policies according to international standards than it is on human rights issues.

The provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang, which involve a domestic territorial dispute, represent what the Chinese government views as examples of the most sensitive core interests. As such, international pressure has been ineffective regarding better treatment of Tibetans and Uyghurs. The Chinese government does not want any part of China breaking off, and thus the Chinese government is very sensitive to any potential calls for allowing more autonomy or progressive action in places such as Tibet and Xinjiang. This explains why the Chinese government reacts
the way it does to international calls for action in such provinces or with activists such as Liu Xiaobo, who is viewed as wanting to bring an end to CCP rule.

The way the Chinese government acts on core issues is related to the overall argument of this dissertation: if the core interest is perceived as not very threatening to CCP rule (e.g. adhering to international trade policies for WTO admission), then the Chinese government is more willing to accommodate international standards and even infringe on its supposed sovereignty issues. But if the core interest is viewed as threatening to CCP rule (e.g. changing policy in Tibet or Xinjiang, or accommodating the desires of Liu Xiaobo), then the CCP is unwilling to act because of the perceived threat to its existence. The core interests argument is also of limited value because of the significant variance the Chinese government has demonstrated on its actions that are deemed core interests. In short, the Chinese government has not been consistent about how it reacts to issues involving what it deems as its core interests.

On the topic of how the term has broadened recently, Zhu Feng, a PRC scholar who teaches at Nanjing University, stated: “It is very vague.”87 Chih-yu Shih (a Taiwanese scholar at National Taiwan University) and Yin Jiwu (a PRC scholar at Beijing Foreign Studied University) point out that even though the term core interests has been depicted in a defensive manner in realist literature, the Chinese government in some instances uses the term to advance territory that is disputed, such as Tibet, Taiwan, and Xinjiang.88 They state that the term core interests was first used by the Chinese government in a defensive manner, signaling to the US to

87 Quoted in Wong, 2015.
88 2013: 65.
stay out of China’s sovereign claims regarding Taiwan and Tibet.\textsuperscript{89} According to Shih and Yin, “the core national interest is a modernist, realist belief, albeit defensive, that reflects the uncompromised violation of each national actor to protect its national security.”\textsuperscript{90}

Orville Schell, a former Dean at UC-Berkeley and currently works at the Asia Society, views China’s use of the term core interests as being too rigid, as it does not allow for the opportunity for the PRC to compromise with other countries on such issues.\textsuperscript{91} Regarding the time period when the PRC only used the phrase core interest to refer to Taiwan, Susan Shirk explains China’s purpose at that point in time: “Beijing used it to signal clearly that it would go to war to prevent the formal independence of Taiwan, a humiliation that could threaten the survival of CCP rule.”\textsuperscript{92}

\textit{C. Sanctions}

Economic sanctions are an example of inequality, as such sanctions may impose harm (such as death in the case of many Iraqis not having access to medicines as a result of such sanctions) to achieve a desired outcome. Sanctions are viewed as a better option than sending troops for war. The US has used more sanctions than any other country to promote human rights, democratization, and other goals. Wherever aimed, sanctions aiming for human rights implementation and democracy

\textsuperscript{89} 2013: 69.
\textsuperscript{90} 2013: 65.
\textsuperscript{91} 2013.
\textsuperscript{92} Shirk, 2013.
are difficult to achieve.\textsuperscript{93} If the government facing the sanctions gives in, then it fears looking weak and caving to international pressure.\textsuperscript{94} Immediately following Tiananmen, numerous countries implemented diplomatic and economic sanctions on China, making it a significant departure from the previous years of business as usual. Henceforth, human rights in China became an important issue for Western states. But many of the sanctions ended quickly, as they proved ineffective in bringing about change regarding human rights in China.

After Tiananmen and throughout his presidency, President George H.W. Bush advocated most favored nation (MFN) status and wanted to increase trade with China.\textsuperscript{95} Reflecting liberal IR theory, the H.W. Bush administration argued that if the focus is on trade and advancing markets with China, then democracy in China would follow. Since his administration viewed China as needing the global economy to promote jobs in China, the US was convinced that it had the upper hand with China.\textsuperscript{96} Thus, the thinking was that the United States needed to engage China—not isolate it—in order for China to be like the United States.

Despite much talk about getting tough with China during his 1992 presidential campaign, Clinton ended linking human rights to MFN for China in 1994. The Clinton administration, like his predecessor, also viewed globalization as a force that would make China follow the United States. Continuing with that thinking in 2000, numerous US Senators for engagement and trade with China emphasized liberal IR notions that countries trading with each other are less likely

\textsuperscript{93} Chan and Drury, 2000: 11.
\textsuperscript{94} Chan and Drury, 2000: 8.
\textsuperscript{95} Li and Drury, 2004.
\textsuperscript{96} Peck, 2010.
to go to war with each other and that such trade would advance democracy in China.97

The whole case of MFN and China (from 1989 to 1995) and attempting to shame China, demonstrates how it did not work. The Chinese government did not acquiesce in American government threats to end MFN if the Chinese government did not allow for human rights.98 This 6-year episode demonstrates the lack of leverage the United States had on China from 1989 to 1995. American leverage since that point has declined even further. In short, economic sanctions do not explain China’s compliance with human rights issues after the early 1990s, when the US delinked China’s human rights record from trade with China.

II. Rational Choice

As stated previously in this dissertation, I use rational choice’s emphasis on actors acting to advance their preferences to explain China’s approach to human rights.99 Also stated previously, I follow Quackenbush’s definition of rational choice, as he states: “Saying that someone is instrumentally rational is not paying them a compliment; it is simply saying that they act according to their preferences, whatever they may be.”100 As I have argued throughout the dissertation, this applies to the Chinese government’s actions. With the Chinese government’s actions in Tibet and Xinjiang, the Chinese government is acting in precisely the way that

98 Li and Drury, 2004.
99 Some of the main rational choice sources that I use in this dissertation are the works of Glaser, 2010, 2015; Quackenbush, 2004; King, 2011; Paik, 2011.
100 2004: 95.
Quackenbush stated above, that is, to have Tibet and Xinjiang remain under PRC control. If the Chinese government were to allow more freedom in Tibet and Xinjiang, then that could potentially result in those two provinces becoming independent, which is anathema to the Chinese government. Thus, even though the CCP does not allow for genuine autonomy in Tibet and Xinjiang, it is acting according to its preferences and thus operating in an “instrumentally rational”\textsuperscript{101} manner based on such preferences.

Risse’s definition of rational choice is also helpful for my approach in this dissertation, as Risse defines rational choice as: “Rational choice focuses on strategic interactions in which agents participate on the basis of their given identities and try to realize their preferences through strategic behavior.”\textsuperscript{102} Regarding a recent special edition in the journal \textit{Democratization}, “Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers,” Tanja Borzel and the other authors focusing on China’s strategic actions are useful here. Based on her findings, Borzel states that China is already acting in a strategic manner to secure its interests instead of acting in a manner to fundamentally change the international system.\textsuperscript{103} This reaffirms my theoretical argument of using rational choice instead of realism to explain China’s actions on human rights. According to Borzel, “China’s indifference towards EU and US democracy promotion in Sub-Sahara Africa and Myanmar confirms the finding that illiberal regional powers do not take issue with Western

\textsuperscript{101} Quackenbush, 2004: 95.
\textsuperscript{102} Risse, 2000: 3.
\textsuperscript{103} See Borzel, 2015.
democracy promotion as long as their strategic interests are not at stake.”  

Borzel states that in the special edition of *Democratization* the authors find that China is not actively encouraging autocratic governance globally.  

However, if the US or the EU’s actions in other countries pose a threat to the strategic interests of countries like China or states like Russia or Saudi Arabia, then those countries act to maintain the non-democratic government in power.  

King’s definition of rational choice is also useful: "At the most general level, rational choice explanations share a sense that we can best explain social practices and institutions by looking to the motivations and expectations of individual agents who desire to satisfy their interests.”  

King went on to add: “These agents are rational insofar as their actions tend to be roughly consistent with their interests, often consciously tailored to meet their needs and satisfy their desires…”  

These definitions by Quackenbush, Risse, and King are very useful in applying to China’s actions on human rights explored in this dissertation.  

*Applying Rational Choice to China*  

With Deng’s actions in crushing the protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989, he wanted to signal to his domestic audience that massive protests are
At that time, the recent events in Eastern Europe were of significant concern to the CCP’s desire to retain power. Reflecting the rational choice emphasis on aiming to advance its preferences, the CCP did not want what happened in Poland and Hungary to happen in China. Thus, concern about international image was not more of a priority than the CCP’s desire to remain in power. Given that Tiananmen received ample international condemnation, the Chinese government responded in a way it saw fit with its own counter offensive to the West’s call for human rights in China by emphasizing the Asian values argument in its justification of not adhering to such international criticism. This Chinese response by using the Asian values argument should really be viewed, as I argue throughout this dissertation, as cover for its main concern: threat to CCP rule. In short, the Chinese government used the Asian values argument as a shield for its main concern of staying in power. In the aftermath of Tiananmen, Deng Xiaoping and other CCP rulers clearly stated that in order for the CCP to stay in power, they must achieve economic growth and have certain policies.

In the years after Tiananmen, when UN agencies criticized China regarding human rights, China demonstrated, by its desire and focus on fighting back, that it was concerned about its international image. If China were not concerned about its international image, then it would not have made the efforts it did or gone to the extent that it did in aiming to advance its argument. During the time period when China was under attack in the UN regarding its human rights, the Chinese

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government put in much effort to meet with delegations of countries outside of UN sessions to advance China’s position on human rights. The Chinese government’s reaction and handling of Tiananmen and afterwards fits with the overall argument in this dissertation: The Chinese government decided that, according to its paramount objective of remaining in power, it was better to crush the protests and incur damage to its international image than to give in to the protests, as that could potentially result in an end to CCP rule.

Since Tiananmen, the Chinese government has used its power with politics and economics to get other countries on board with what it wants in the UN. Along similar lines, Nathan states that since Tiananmen, China’s economic ascendancy and its diplomacy “have helped Beijing become one of the most proactive forces shaping the international human rights regime’s next phase of evolution.” After Tiananmen, China worked with the international human rights regime to advance its interests within that body. In short, China realized that by being actively involved in the international human rights regime it could advance its interests in the regime, which is very similar to the rational choice argument that I use in this dissertation. Regarding this aspect, China did not want the international human rights regime to be able to dictate what China could do domestically or in its international affairs regarding issues of human rights.

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115 Sceats and Breslin, 2012: 4-5.  
116 Foot and Inboden, 2014: 861.  
In September 1990, the Chinese government had its first conference on human rights. The following year, 1991, the Chinese government released its first white paper on human rights in response to international criticism of human rights in China, with the goals being: (1) to educate international actors about human rights in China and (2) to explain to its own people how the West lies about human rights issues. Every year since 1991, the Chinese government has released white papers on human rights and what it considers human rights issues, sometimes releasing multiple documents in a given year. Due to international concern regarding both Tibet and Xinjiang, some of these white papers have specifically focused on those two provinces, for the Chinese government wants to frame the issues of human rights as it sees fit. This attempt by the Chinese government to engage in dialogue on human rights clearly reflects how the Chinese government wants to advance its argument and thus preferences regarding human rights. Given that these white papers are available online in English, the intended audience is international actors.

In focusing on a more recent event in China and using rational choice, Wooyeal Paik, a Korean-based scholar, examines the relationship between issues of threat to CCP rule and accepting humanitarian aid. Paik examines the CCP’s reaction to the Sichuan earthquake in May 2008. According to Paik, the Chinese government accepted international humanitarian assistance in 2008 because the

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120 Wei, 1995.
121 The Chinese government has released ten white papers on Tibet and two on Xinjiang.
government perceived little threat to its rule by doing so, as the rescue and recovery efforts were primary for the CCP.\textsuperscript{123}

\textit{III. Cosmopolitanism}

Given that cosmopolitanism emphasizes the fair distribution of resources in international politics, it argues that states should not pursue a strategy in which the sole focus is to advance their own gain in IR. In reflecting a liberal perspective, states should be concerned about advancing the interests of all countries in IR. In short, cosmopolitanism is about universal responsibility to advance human rights. Cosmopolitan thinkers, such as Charles Beitz\textsuperscript{124} and Jonathan Seglow\textsuperscript{125} argue that non-citizens in a given country deserve the same rights as citizens. This school of thought argues that people have moral worth and have it equally. Seglow argues that resource redistribution is needed regarding immigration. Seglow argues that we should focus on globally redistributing resources to people who need them and thus prevent migration. Seglow argues that shifting resources is better than shifting people. If resources were shifted, it would prevent migration. Thus, wealthy countries should be providing resources to poor countries. Seglow’s point is very applicable to the humanitarian disaster plaguing those fleeing Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Ultimately, it seems that Seglow’s suggestions about providing resources and also stabilizing those three turbulent countries is the most pressing issue in terms of preventing the mass exodus of the populations there.

\textsuperscript{123} 2011: 451.
\textsuperscript{124} See Beitz, 2009.
\textsuperscript{125} See Seglow, 2005.
The European Union (EU) reflects the principles of cosmopolitanism in its IR, as it seeks to promote values, principles, and norms all over the world. The EU places human rights as a central component of its IR, as it financially supports organizations and people committed to a human rights focus. The EU has imposed sanctions on states for human rights abuses. Thus, the EU has a very active foreign policy on human rights promotion. Given that the EU engages states like China and Iran on human rights and supports local initiatives to advance human rights, Chinese IR does not reflect cosmopolitanism.

Though perhaps one could argue that some components of cosmopolitanism are reflected in Chinese IR, such as China's call for a fair redistribution of global resources and it being the champion of the global South in terms of voting to shield the governments of developing countries when they are called out on human rights abuses. However, offering such protection to human rights-abusing governments does not reflect the foundation of cosmopolitanism. While China claims to be advancing the interests of the South in the UNGA, it also clearly advances itself with its actions in its IR. Regarding cosmopolitism’s views on immigration, China’s lack of a naturalization policy clearly puts it at odds with cosmopolitanism. Additionally, there is tension between sovereignty and cosmopolitanism. Advocates of sovereignty, such as China on issues of its domestic human rights practice, do not want ethics to completely determine foreign policy. In short, cosmopolitanism is clearly lacking as an approach in terms of explaining China’s actions on human rights in its IR or at the UN.
IV. Asian Values

The Asian values debate has received significant attention from state actors, scholars, and human rights activists. This section examines all three of those groups on the topic of Asian values. First, I provide the views from state actors in East Asia. Then, I devote space to a reaction from a Korean human rights activist on the topic. After, attention is devoted to the scholarship on the topic.

According to the Asian values argument, political and civil rights are less important than the urgent need for economic development in such developing countries. Moreover, civil and political rights vary based on countries and cultures. Those views were reflected and emphasized in the 1993 Bangkok Declaration, which was produced by Asian states. Even though the human rights document emphasized that the member states are committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as well as the Charter of the UN, a number of items contained in the Bangkok Declaration reflect a different view from Western notions on human rights. The adamant emphasis on sovereignty is evident in the document, as the document seeks to advance “the principles of respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.” In addition, there is much emphasis on the right to development—not just civil and political rights. The document states that the right to development is “a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights.”

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126 This 1993 Bangkok Declaration was produced prior to the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis, which was a severe blow to the notion of the Asian values’ notion that authoritarian states can provide solid economic development. In short, the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998 discredited much of the Asian values argument.

127 Daniel Bell observes that since UDHR did not seek ideas from East Asian countries, UDHR lacks full legitimacy in East Asia (Bell, 1996: 655). In addition, Bell argues that the Bangkok Declaration reflects Asian ideas on the topic and thus challenges UDHR (see Bell, 1996: 656).
document, there is a clear emphasis on avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach to human rights, as the document stresses the need to take into account “the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds.” In stressing that development and economic rights are very important, the document states: “economic, social, culture, civil and political rights” should all receive the same attention and not favor one over the other. According to the document, “poverty is one of the major obstacles hindering the full enjoyment of human rights.” Thus, in contrast to the West’s primary focus on political and civil rights as human rights, the Bangkok Declaration advocates another focus, namely on economic development. In addition, each country should be judged individually regarding human rights, and thus no set standards should apply.

In an interview one year after the Bangkok Declaration, Lee Kuan Yew, who was Prime Minister of Singapore\textsuperscript{128} from 1959 to 1990 and was the first to mention the concept of Asian values, stated: “In the East the main object is to have a well-ordered society so that everybody can have maximum enjoyment of his freedoms.”\textsuperscript{129} In addition to Lee Kuan Yew, Malaysia’s former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad is regarded as the other leading proponent of the Asian values argument.\textsuperscript{130} They and Suharto of Indonesia have argued that Asian values are different from Western values.\textsuperscript{131} In a speech delivered in the year 2000, Malaysia’s

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[128] Chu et al. regard Singapore as, “the most economically developed authoritarian state ever.” (2008: 9)
\item[129] Quoted in Zakaria, 1994: 111
\item[131] Mukherjee, 2010: 685.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad had critical words for global wealthy elites who supposedly seek to advance human rights globally. According to Mahathir Mohammad, "As we all know the pressure to democratize and respect human rights is not due to concern for the well-being of people, but for the benefit of those rich people wishing to reap more profits for themselves in more countries.” He stated this in the context of little international pressure on central Asian states to democratize. Malaysia’s Prime Minister went on to add that as the central Asian countries develop their economies, then there will be international calls for democracy in those countries, as such international actors want to benefit from it.

Mahathir Mohammad stated that regarding decolonization in Asia in the twentieth century, it was not due to altruistic intentions by the West. Instead, he states that the West proceeded with decolonization in Asia due to the concern that Asians would align with the Soviet Union if the West did not end colonialism in Asia.132

Similar with Malaysia, Iran, another Muslim country in Asia, has also advanced the emphasis on cultural relativism and human rights issues. With the creation of the Islamic Republic in Iran, rights became a focus. But the debate was not about human rights. Instead, it was about Islamic rights. Accordingly, the focus is on Islam and the rights that God, according to the way Islamic clerics in Iran perceive it, allows to Iranians. Iran thus rejects universal human rights. The Iranian government views international criticism of its human rights as coming from the US-led international system and thus lacking legitimacy. Shaming Iran is thus ineffective. The Iranian government argues that Western standards do not apply to

132 See 2000 speech.
Iran on human rights issues. People in Iran must follow God’s instructions. Islamic law rules Iran. But the Iranian government often violates its own laws and policies. Iran advances Islamic rights—not universal rights. From a similar cloth as the Asian values emphasis on economic advancement, these rights by Iran focus on economic rights.\textsuperscript{133}

China’s involvement in the Asian values debate started in the early 1990s when China released its first White Paper in 1991, which was on human rights.\textsuperscript{134} For the Chinese government, its rhetoric regarding the Asian values debate has consistently used more of a China-specific focus than the broader concept of Asian values, though the focus of the argument is essentially the same.\textsuperscript{135}

According to Kim Dae Jung, who was both an activist in Korea and then became president of his country from 1998 to 2003,\textsuperscript{136} Lee Kuan Yew went too far in his assessment that culture is all-powerful, though Kim does not dismiss the significance of culture.\textsuperscript{137} Kim argues for the opposite of an aggressive Singaporean system of political control: “The proper way to cure the ills of industrial societies is not to impose the terror of a police state but to emphasize ethical education, give high regard to spiritual values, and promote high standards in culture and the arts.”\textsuperscript{138} In Kim’s view, Asian countries are indeed capable of democracy and have the potential to have an even more advanced degree of democracy than some Western countries. According to Kim, “There are no ideas more fundamental to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[133] See Karabell, 2000: 206-223.
\item[134] Paltemaa, 2008: 63.
\item[135] Kent, 2008: 83.
\item[136] Samuel Kim regards Kim Dae Jung as “the anti-Asian values human rights champion.” (2000: 155)
\item[137] 1994: 190.
\end{footnotes}
democracy than the teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Tonghak [a religion in Korea].”

Thus, Kim argues that Asian countries have a rich history with democratic philosophy on a similar scale as the West. In explaining why he is optimistic about the future of democracy taking root in Asia, he states: “The fundamental reason for my optimism is this increasing awareness of the importance of democracy and human rights among Asians themselves and their willingness to make the necessary efforts to realize these goals.” People in Asia, according to Kim, are yearning for democracy. It is not Asian culture, in Kim’s view, that is hindering democratization; instead, it is the non-democratically elected leaders and their supporters who are the problem. In Kim’s words: “The biggest obstacle is not its cultural heritage but the resistance of authoritarian rulers and their apologists.”

From a very similar cloth as Kim Dae Jung, numerous scholars have argued that the Asian values argument is nothing more than a creation by Asian state actors to advance their authoritarian rule. Many Asian countries, including China, have resorted to the Asian values argument to justify their poor human rights practice. Kunal Mukherjee, who teaches at Lancaster University, argues that in recent years political figures in Southeast Asia have taken up the Asian values issue to hold onto power. In other words, politicians in Southeast Asia use the Asian values issue as

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142 1994: 194.
143 Mukherjee, 2010; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Kent, 2008; Xiaorong Li, 2001; Bauer and Bell, 1999.
144 Mukherjee, 2010: 693.
an excuse for not implementing democracy or political openness.\textsuperscript{145} As Keck and Sikkink point out, numerous Asian states have dismissed international pressure on human rights by invoking Asian values as justification.\textsuperscript{146} Kent points out that authoritarian political leaders in Asia were the first to advance the notion of Asian values.\textsuperscript{147} Such leaders invoked Asian values to appear as legitimate leaders in the context of other authoritarian governments in Eastern Europe being brought down.\textsuperscript{148} Moreover, Asian values was also used by these leaders as a way to preserve the status quo and not allow for changes associated with globalization related to politics, society, and culture.\textsuperscript{149}

Xiaorong Li also argues that leaders in East and Southeast Asia use the Asian values issue to their advantage—“leaders from the region find that they have a convenient tool to silence internal criticism and to fan anti-Western nationalist sentiments.”\textsuperscript{150} Thus, for Li, these Asian political leaders who invoke Asian values to justify their rule are opportunists. Bauer and Bell state that: “‘Asian values’ is a term devised by several Asian officials and their supporters for the purpose of challenging ‘Western-style’ civil and political freedoms.”\textsuperscript{151} Bauer and Bell also point out that authoritarian governments and political leaders point to culture or Asian values as an excuse to justify their harsh rule.\textsuperscript{152} While not advocates of the Asian values argument, Bauer and Bell do point out the importance in working with

\textsuperscript{145} Mukherjee, 2010: 686-687.
\textsuperscript{146} Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 118-119.
\textsuperscript{147} Kent, 2008: 83.
\textsuperscript{148} Kent, 2008: 83.
\textsuperscript{149} Kent, 2008: 83.
\textsuperscript{150} 2001: 37-38.
\textsuperscript{151} 1999: 5.
\textsuperscript{152} 1999: 12.
given cultures in the attempt to advance human rights. According to Bauer and Bell, “The struggle to promote human rights is more likely to be won if it is fought in ways that speak to local cultural traditions.”\footnote{153} In Sen’s view, “The championing of Asian values is often associated with the need to resist Western hegemony.”\footnote{154}

Given the significance of Confucianism in East Asia, that topic has received ample scholarship in the context of the Asian values debate, with some arguing that Confucianism is compatible with democracy and others arguing that it is incompatible with democracy. Some scholars\footnote{155} argue that Confucianism does not fit neatly with democracy. According to Baohui Zhang, a PRC scholar who teaches at Lingnan University in Hong Kong, Confucianism does not stress rule of law; instead, it stresses “rule by virtues and virtuous men.”\footnote{156} Hung-mao Tien, a Republic of China citizen who went from being a college professor to foreign minister in Taiwan, sums up Confucius teachings as: “teachings that engender an acceptance of authoritarianism.”\footnote{157}

Some scholars argue that Chinese history and culture does not fit well with democracy, while others argue that there is no impediment. In Gold’s view, Chinese history is important to take into account when understanding the political system that may evolve in China, as he regards “China’s traditional political culture and history” as “potentially unfavorable to democracy.”\footnote{158} Gold went on to add: “Chinese political culture, as revealed in centuries of practice, takes a zero-sum,
moralistic view of political disagreements, in which the ultimate objective is the elimination of rivals as well as their followers, families, and even names."\(^{159}\)

Other scholars, however, do not view Confucianism or the topic of Asian values as an impediment to democracy.\(^{160}\) On the more general topic of Asian values, Fukuyama argues that Asian values and Western democracy can coexist.\(^{161}\) Curtis dismisses the idea that East Asian culture and democracy are incompatible.\(^{162}\) Likewise, Edward Friedman argues that democracy and Confucianism can indeed coexist. Friedman points out that a number of Confucian influenced countries, such as Japan, Taiwan, and Korea, are now democracies. Similar with Friedman, Katsumata argues that Asian values and human rights can coexist.\(^{163}\) According to Liu Qing, who seeks democracy and an improvement in human rights in China, “It is precisely because support exists among the people for this official position [that human rights and China do not go well together] that human rights and democracy have remained a difficult issue for China for so long.”\(^{164}\) He points out that a leading reason or justification in China for the CCP in recent years regarding the delay of democracy in China is that economic development takes priority over democracy and human rights.\(^{165}\) In Liu Qing’s view, East Asia is indeed capable of democracy and human rights, pointing to Taiwan, Japan, and South Koreas as examples.\(^{166}\)

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162 1998: 222.
165 1996: 333.
dissident Chang Ping (also known as Zhang Ping) also rejects the idea that China cannot become a democracy because China is somehow not ready for democracy.\textsuperscript{167}

Though not an advocate of authoritarian rule, Daniel Bell has long argued that a Chinese farmer would rather see economic issues advanced than an abstract concept such as democracy.\textsuperscript{168} In short, Bell argues that Chinese peasants are not yearning for democracy.\textsuperscript{169} According to Bell, “if the Confucian has to choose between personal autonomy and family duties, the latter more often than not will have priority.”\textsuperscript{170} This supports Bell’s idea of the lack of concern in terms of importance for personal autonomy in East Asia. He uses this to justify his argument that in East Asia people would rather have “a Singapore-style paternalistic regime that provides individuals with special incentives to attend to the needs of family members and officially discriminates against those who relinquish their duties to care for elderly parents and children over a liberal system whose principal virtue is that it provides individuals with the opportunity to exercise their moral powers of choice.”\textsuperscript{171} In his most recent book, Bell argues that with the rise of China, political meritocracy (i.e. no elections but having technocrats run the government) has made a significant impact globally.\textsuperscript{172} Bell states that since the early 1990s, China’s political system has evolved in a rather meritocratic manner, with those advancing in government who are the most capable to fill various positions in the government.

\textsuperscript{167} Johnson, 2012: “Is Democracy Chinese? An Interview with Journalist Chang Ping.”
\textsuperscript{168} Bell, 1995: 17; see also his most recent book, 2015.
\textsuperscript{169} 1995: 32.
\textsuperscript{170} Bell, 1995: 26.
\textsuperscript{171} Bell, 1995: 26.
\textsuperscript{172} 2015: 3.
Bell argues that this has contributed greatly to China's economic development.\textsuperscript{173} In his view, due to China's conditions, competitive elections will not solve any problems (such as corruption) or improve good governance in China.\textsuperscript{174} In short, Bell argues that democracies have ample shortcomings, especially how politicians are focused on the short term and do not take into account long term benefits of the country.\textsuperscript{175} Bell argues that political meritocracy is something that can be embraced not just in China, or East Asia, but throughout the world. Thus, Bell seeks to advance his argument well beyond the Asian values argument.

Similar to Bell, Tianjin Shi, a PRC scholar who taught at Tsinghua, argues that for peasants in underdeveloped areas in China, the basic necessities of food and living conditions trump politics and democracy.\textsuperscript{176} Going further than the previous scholars, Min Tang, who teaches at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, stated: “The members of the Chinese middle class are not ready to be agents of political development in action.”\textsuperscript{177}

In East Asia, there are both similarities and differences among the countries, and thus Asian values mean different things to different people in East Asia.\textsuperscript{178} As stated above, politicians who have been proponents of Asian values were not all from Confucian-influenced countries; rather, leaders from Islamic and Buddhist countries have also invoked Asian values.\textsuperscript{179} Thus, one cannot make the case that

\begin{flushright}
\begin{tabular}{l}
\textsuperscript{173} 2015: 3-4.  \\
\textsuperscript{174} 2015: 1-10.  \\
\textsuperscript{175} 2015: 1-10.  \\
\textsuperscript{176} Shi, 2000: 246.  \\
\textsuperscript{177} 2011: 373.  \\
\textsuperscript{178} Huang, 2007: 155, 159.  \\
\textsuperscript{179} Mukherjee, 2010: 686.  \\
\end{tabular}
\end{flushright}
Asian values are solely Confucian. As Huang sums it up, “the whole notion of Asian values seems to be problematic.”\(^{180}\) Regarding the Asian values debate overall, Sen points out that when speaking about Asian values the focus is usually about East Asia.\(^{181}\) Moreover, Sen points to quantitative studies in arguing that Lee Kuan Yew’s notion that economic development takes priority over human rights and that human rights interfere with economic development is not accurate.\(^{182}\)

While the Bangkok Declaration emphasizes sovereignty, China does not, as I point out in this dissertation, always adhere to sovereignty on human rights, as China criticizes the US, Israel, and other Western countries with its statements in the UN. Moreover, its voting pattern also reveals that it is not a consistent supporter of sovereignty, as it has voted more according to strategic interests than a pure sovereignty focus. Thus, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, the sovereignty issue does not hold up well for China’s actions regarding sovereignty and human rights. Regarding the topic of Asian values, it is more of a convenient notion than it is an actual guidance of China’s actions domestically or in IR.

The Asian values emphasis on economic development is something that is significant and worthy of attention, as economic, cultural, and social rights consist of one of the two main types of human rights. On the importance of economic rights, Mary Robinson, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, is critical of economic rights not receiving the attention that it should. As she states: “too little attention has been paid in the past to this important area [economic, social, and

\(^{180}\) Huang, 2007: 155.  
\(^{182}\) 1999: 171-172.
cultural rights] of human rights.”183 This is indeed a valid argument that Robinson makes and one that the Asian values argument could use to support its focus. However, given that there is no emphasis or value on political rights according to Asian values, developing economic rights becomes problematic if it interferes with the government’s agenda. Thus, I argue that both rights—economic and political—are essential. In short, Asian values, as some other scholars have also argued, is simply used by the Chinese government as a way to deflect criticism of itself and to maintain its grip on power. According to the Asian values argument, since political and civil rights are deemphasized, this empowers the government. And that is what the CCP wants. Thus, the Asian values argument is also of limited use for this dissertation, as it cannot fully explain China’s actions on human rights, specifically regarding sovereignty and China’s criticism of other countries on human rights.

V. Modernization Theory

Modernization theory is the idea that economic improvement leads to greater political openness. Based on the data analysis by Burkhart and Lewis-Beck, for their data findings of 131 countries from 1972 to 1989 they argue that economic development helps advance democracy and democratization.184 Curtis also argues that economic growth helps democratization.185 In 1995, Minxin Pei, who received his undergraduate degree in China and now teaches at Claremont McKenna College, stated: “It has now become a truism that economic liberalization fosters political
Writing in 2001, Liu Juning, a Beijing based scholar, supported modernization theory in general, stating the data supports the notion that as an economy becomes more open, political openness follow. Regarding China, he stated: “From a bottom-up perspective, the more open and liberalized China becomes, the more freedom and rights the Chinese people will enjoy.” Davis is against the notion that an authoritarian regime that achieves strong and sustained economic growth will be able to continue to repress. He argues that in the case of strong economic growth occurring for authoritarian regimes, political liberalization will most likely happen. In Davis’ view, “As the state becomes more successful and creates more interests, it eventually cannot satisfy the needs of these various interests to participate without reforming itself politically.”

In the case of China, modernization theory, as I argued earlier in this dissertation, does a poor job in explaining the evolution of China’s political and economic development. In fact, with the chart on per capita GDP and China’s human rights abuses that I created and presented earlier in the dissertation, we see the exact opposite of what modernization theory would suggest. While we see significant increases in both per capita GDP and in FDI that China receives, we also see that there is a decrease in political rights or a worsening of human rights abuses. According to modernization theory, economic development results in improved political development. Also, regarding elections in China, such elections have been
carried out in rural areas, which are significantly less development than the more affluent urban areas. That is also inconsistent with modernization theory. In short, modernization theory does not hold when trying to understand China’s human rights approach.

VI. Constructivism, socialization, and norms in the ASEAN/East Asian context

According to constructivism, governments abide by norms because they do not want to be named and shamed by IOs, NGOs, and other actors. On the topic of norms, IOs are in a good position to further norms, as they have people with specific knowledge (or an epistemic community). Finnemore and Sikkink\(^\text{191}\) argue that norms set the standard for acceptable behavior. Norms keep actors in line and limit bad behavior. Finnemore and Sikkink advance the idea of “norm entrepreneurs,” those who push a norm with the goal being acceptance of that norm by others.

In focusing on ASEAN and two transnational norms, 1) security and 2) intervention, Amitav Acharya explores the issue of localization, which he defines as “the active construction (through discourse, framing, grafting, and cultural selection) of foreign ideas by local actors, which result in the former developing significant congruence with local beliefs and practices.”\(^\text{192}\) ASEAN attempted to reconcile these two norms in the 1990s: 1) creating a security organization,\(^\text{193}\) and 2) the idea of intervention in another ASEAN state, thereby violating the notion of

\(^{191}\) 1998.
\(^{192}\) Acharya, 2004: 245.
\(^{193}\) The foundation for such an organization was the norm of security for ASEAN members (Acharya, 2004: 240).
sovereignty and non-intervention. ASEAN accepted the first norm, but not the second.\textsuperscript{194}

When ASEAN was founded in 1967, it was composed of illiberal governments and had no emphasis on human rights or democracy.\textsuperscript{195} It is essential to take this into account, Acharya argues, in order to understand why a campaign to advance human rights in Burma was unsuccessful. According to Acharya, “The campaign by human rights activists against Burma failed because advocacy of human rights and democratic governance had no place in ASEAN, which did not specify a democratic political system as a criterion for membership.”\textsuperscript{196} In Acharya’s case study with ASEAN and localization, he argues that if such ideas or norms are very different from indigenous traditions, then such ideas or norms will not be well-received by Southeast Asians.\textsuperscript{197} If local actors are perceived as advancing the agenda of an outside interest, whether an outside state or IO, then that weakens the prospects of success for localization.\textsuperscript{198}

Acharya argues that in order for localization to be embraced, norm-takers need to view such foreign norms as beneficial for them. For example, such norms need to be viewed as not only non-threatening, but also as able “to enhance the legitimacy and authority of their extant institutions and practices.”\textsuperscript{199} Another issue that helps localization is having strong local norms in existence. If local norms are strong, then there is a foundation for accepting norms from outside to build upon

\textsuperscript{194} Acharya, 2004: 240-241.
\textsuperscript{195} Acharya, 2004: 262.
\textsuperscript{196} Acharya, 2004: 263.
\textsuperscript{197} Acharya, 2004: 244.
\textsuperscript{198} Acharya, 2004: 263.
\textsuperscript{199} Acharya, 2004: 248.
previously existing norms.\textsuperscript{200} Moreover, having local actors with clout is also helpful for localization. If local actors or norm entrepreneurs are perceived as supporters of the local issues and values, then that will help such outside norms being welcomed.\textsuperscript{201} Under localization, outside ideas are adjusted to fit well with local ways.\textsuperscript{202} Thus, localization is not simply a complete adaptation to outside norms. Having said that, such new, outside norms have the potential to bring about significant change. As the outside ideas become familiar to local actors, then such ideas or norms become more accepted, which allows for the norms to be integrated into the local society.\textsuperscript{203} If countries have norms that fit well with outside ones, it is more likely for localization success.

Acharya argues that at the time of his 2004 article, ASEAN was not pushing for any attempt to advance human rights and wanted non-interference.\textsuperscript{204} Because ASEAN states have authoritarian domestic politics, it is an ASEAN norm.\textsuperscript{205} Non-interference is essential for ASEAN states because, as Acharya points out, such states do not want to be targeted militarily or by other states for human rights abuses.\textsuperscript{206} In the post Cold War period, Acharya argues that ASEAN was more receptive to common security than it was to humanitarian intervention, as common security had a foundation in ASEAN previously. Humanitarian intervention,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{200} Acharya, 2004: 248.
\item \textsuperscript{201} Acharya, 2004: 248.
\item \textsuperscript{202} Acharya, 2004: 251.
\item \textsuperscript{203} Acharya, 2004: 253.
\item \textsuperscript{204} 2004: 265.
\item \textsuperscript{205} Acharya, 2004: 268.
\item \textsuperscript{206} Acharya, 2004: 268.
\end{itemize}
however, had been long opposed by ASEAN. Based on his case study, some regions may be more receptive to certain norms than others, due to localization. In short, Acharya argues that we should not assume that simply because certain norms are doing well in a given region, such norms will be automatically embraced elsewhere, pointing to the localization process as justification.

Acharya’s point here is very important to take into account when examining how the Chinese government reacts to norms. The Chinese government, very similar to the ASEAN states, also has a long history of authoritarian rule, an emphasis on sovereignty when it comes to domestic human rights practice, and non-intervention regarding humanitarian circumstances. Just as ASEAN has been hesitant at best about intervention for humanitarian purposes in other countries, China has also espoused that position because it is very concerned about being targeted with a similar intervention regarding Tibet, Xinjiang, and Taiwan for humanitarian purposes. The Chinese government is, as I demonstrate throughout this dissertation by employing rational choice’s emphasis on actors acting in a manner that advances their preferences, very concerned about any potential threat to CCP rule, and thus the Chinese government acts accordingly. In other words, the Chinese government is very careful to avoid anything that may potentially lead to its demise.

A. The Constructivist emphasis on image and Chinese IR

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207 Acharya, 2004: 269.
208 Acharya, 2004: 269.
According to constructivism, states modify their actions because they do not want to receive bad press on human rights abuses. Image is central then for why states modify their human rights practice. On this topic of image and how the Chinese government acts, there are numerous actions the Chinese government has taken to advance its soft power, which demonstrates that the Chinese government is concerned about its international image, such as establishing Confucius Institutes and Chinese Central Television (CCTV) globally and with its foreign aid. In short, the Chinese government is serious about wanting to influence international opinion on China by using the media, in particular Xinhua, to its advantage. China’s goal is for Xinhua to be on same level as CNN or the BBC.

Numerous scholars have observed that China is concerned about its international image in general. Foot and Walter, for example, state that generally speaking: “Image, and reasonably high levels of distributive fairness, as expressed in widespread signature of international treaties, can be persuasive when China debates whether to adhere to global norms.” Foot and Walter observe that China is concerned about the way it is perceived globally on climate change, though both China and the US have resisted international calls for more international cooperation on climate change. Larson and Shevchenko argue that the chances of

210 Regarding Chinese aid, the bulk of it has been requested by the host country. Thus, the construction projects carried out by China abroad are the requests of the host governments (Reilly, 2012: 72). Reilly argues that the Chinese government has two main objectives with its aid program: ‘pursuing strategic interests while also bolstering Beijing’s credibility as a responsible contributor to global and regional governance’ (Reilly, 2012: 73).
211 Economy, 2010: 150.
212 Foot and Walter, 2011; Johnston, 2008; Cheng Li, 2008; Larson and Shevchenko, 2010.
213 Foot and Walter, 2011: 162.
215 2011: 279.
the Chinese government playing an increased role in global governance are greater when the government feels China's status will increase by doing so. Johnston points out that regarding China’s voting in the UNGA from 1980 to 2000, China chose to abstain rather than veto issues in the UNGA so as to not appear as defying international opinion. Regarding the UNGA resolutions that China did not support, when there was a solid yes vote in the UNGA by member states, China abstained instead of voting no, as voting no would have put China at odds with the international community. In short, the larger the vote in favor of a resolution in the UNGA, China abstained instead of voting no. But when the vote for a given resolution was just over 50 percent by UNGA member states, then China voted no instead of abstain in those cases. In brief, the Chinese government is concerned about its international image.

The Chinese government does not simply allow international criticism of its actions. Instead, the Chinese government seeks to advance its version in order to win the argument. Thus, the Chinese government knows that resisting international calls to action will not play out well internationally, but it still seeks to advance its version of the argument, such as issuing a Confucius Award with the international criticism it faced over its handling of not allowing Liu Xiaobo out of prison to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. A naming and shaming campaign in the spring of 2008 on China should have been the most propitious time for such a campaign to achieve

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216 2010.
217 See Johnston, 2008
218 See Johnston, 2008.
219 For this point on how the Chinese government does not accept or go along with international criticism of its human rights situation in China, but instead launches its defense of what is going on in China, see Sceats and Breslin, 2012: 1.
success, as it was just a few months prior to the long-anticipated 2008 Beijing Games. China wanted to display a spectacular Games and wanted a good international image. However, that case, like many other cases involving human rights inside of China, did not achieve a successful naming and shaming campaign.

Overall, while constructivism is helpful in understanding certain actions in Chinese foreign policy, such as Johnston does in his book *Social States*. Regarding Chinese adoption of the Landmines Protocol (often referred to as Protocol II), which was in 1995-1996, Johnston states: “Chinese diplomats and decision-makers back in Beijing decided that image was more important than the economic and limited military costs of signing PII.” In other examples in which international image was also significant for Chinese action, according to Johnston, the Chinese government changed its position on a number of issues related to trade and animal abuse because it was concerned about being potentially named and shamed by international NGOs. Johnston argues that China switched from capital punishment by bullet to lethal injection because of China’s concern of going against international norms on this particular issue. Thus, constructivism is indeed useful for examining certain aspects of Chinese IR. However, it does less well with the human rights issues examined in this dissertation. Also, with constructivism’s emphasis that states do not want to be named and shamed and thus stop the bad

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220 Given that members of the Central Committee of the CCP attended Zhang Yimou’s rehearsals and told him their views on the performance preparations for the 2008 Opening Ceremony, which resulted in Zhang Yimou omitting some dances and putting more emphasis on the Chinese flag, the lighting of the torch, and the children, this clearly demonstrates the high level of interest the Chinese government had in the 2008 Beijing Games (Callahan, 2010: 5).
221 2008: 132.
222 2008: 134.
behavior to avoid naming and shaming, this is simply not the case for China, as China is unwilling to adhere to international criticism when it perceives its very existence in the balance.

B. Naming and shaming

The time period of the 1970s and the 1980s was the first time that states sought to advance human rights as a component of their foreign policy. Moreover, human rights in other countries became a concern of Western states. This time period (the 1970s and the 1980s) coincides with the development of China and the West's engagement with China. Naming and shaming is generally defined as the attempt to call out publically, or, as the title suggests, “name and shame,” a human rights abuser for the human rights abuses (usually political and civil rights) being carried out. As Krain observes, naming and shaming can come from non-state actors such as human rights organizations (Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International often name and shame states with in their attempt to change the behavior of state actors) and the media or from state-led organization such as IOs. The goal of such naming and shaming is a change in behavior that does not abuse human rights. NGOs have played a central role in advancing human rights, with naming and shaming states on human rights abuses. This has resulted in states taking into account values and norms.

Regarding the successful campaigns in the naming and shaming literature, the following have all been provided as reasons for success: 1) concern about

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225 2012: 575.
international image;\textsuperscript{226} 2) reliance on military or economic aid;\textsuperscript{227} 3) presence of domestic human rights NGOs;\textsuperscript{228} and 4) transnational actors being able to penetrate the given country.\textsuperscript{229} Regarding naming and shaming, Keck and Sikkink advanced the notion of a boomerang pattern, which occurs when domestic NGOs and domestic opposition in a given country work with INGOs and states to engage and expose the government on human rights issues, as the domestic groups alone cannot penetrate the authoritarian government.\textsuperscript{230} Domestic human rights NGOs are essential in the process of bringing about change and working with transnational networks. If there is no domestic opposition or no domestic NGOs, transnational networks have difficulty penetrating a country for change on human rights issues, as it is all up to international actors.\textsuperscript{231} Thus, in applying this to China, it is indeed an uphill battle for human rights improvement in the country, as Wachman argues that “absent a viable opposition within China, shaming may not only be ineffective in altering Beijing’s behavior, but also counterproductive.”\textsuperscript{232} Regarding the four factors cited above in the naming and shaming literature for bringing about positive change, China is very much concerned about its international image. China is, however, unwilling to accommodate calls for change regarding what it perceives as threatening to CCP rule. The other three factors are largely missing in the case of China.

\textsuperscript{226} Keck and Sikkink, 1998.
\textsuperscript{227} Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Risse and Sikkink, 1999: 1-38.
\textsuperscript{228} Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Wachman, 2001: 257.
\textsuperscript{229} See the case studies in Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, \textit{The power of human rights}.
\textsuperscript{230} Keck and Sikkink; Risse and Sikkink, 1999: 1-38.
\textsuperscript{231} Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Wachman, 2001.
\textsuperscript{232} 2001: 257.
It is commonly viewed that naming and shaming China on human rights has not been effective. While I acknowledge that naming and shaming has been unsuccessful in bringing about change within China, my focus in this dissertation is more about how it relates to the Chinese government’s desire to advance its preferences. China’s token gestures of compassion or leniency in the case of certain high profile dissidents do not equate to substantive policy change. For example, the Chinese government’s release of Rebiya Kadeer, a leading Uyghur critic of the Chinese government, from prison in 2005 and allowing her to leave China for the United States is an example of China trying to please the United States. Even though the Chinese government released Kadeer, there was not a policy change in Xinjiang. In brief, the release of Kadeer should not be viewed as a dramatic change in Chinese policy regarding Xinjiang, as the Chinese government simply allowed one person to leave and continued the repression in Xinjiang. More so than Xinjiang, Tibet has been an issue on which Westerners have long aimed to name and shame China. Despite such international shaming, the Chinese government has not implemented policies that Western actors have advocated regarding Tibet, for it is perceived as potentially threatening to CCP rule.

The case of the China Democratic Party (CDP) illustrates the difficulty of a domestic group in China aiming to work with international actors in bringing about change in China. In the late 1990s, as the CDP was aiming to gain ground, it briefly worked with transnational networks but was terminated and its leaders arrested. Despite the international criticism for doing so, the Chinese government cracked

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234 Kinzelbach, 2013: 146-181.
down on the CDP and sentenced some CDP members to prison for eleven to thirteen
years. Similar to the case of the CDP, NGOs in China tend to lack autonomy. As
Baogang He points out: "Politically oriented Chinese NGOs are suppressed by the
government." While the Chinese government is very cautious about NGOs, it has
allowed some space for NGOs, as the Chinese government recognizes that NGOs can
help move the country forward. The number of NGOs in China increased greatly
in the 1990s. Significant funding for these Chinese NGOs has been provided from
overseas states and non-state actors. However, under the Xi leadership, allowing for
international funding of NGOs has taken a turn for the worse and NGOs in general
have experienced serious setbacks in terms of their operations.

It is common for states to reject international charges of norm violations. Repressive
states often point to issues of sovereignty and thus what happens in
their country is under their control. Therefore, initially, it is an uphill battle for the
boomerang effect, as it is often ineffective. Moreover, the authoritarian government
tends to mobilize supporters to rally for the government. Although authoritarian
governments deny the allegation of human rights abuses, such governments do not
dismiss the concept of human rights; instead, such governments stress the concept
of sovereignty on this topic. In short, even authoritarian governments do not
publically reject the notion of human rights. Such governments abide by norms
because they do not want to be denounced for violating such norms. Having said

235 Kinzelbach, 2013.
236 2006: 177.
237 Fewsmith, 2008.
238 Risse and Sikkink, 1999.
that, some repressive governments are not concerned about international pressure or shaming.\textsuperscript{240} If a state is not vulnerable to international pressure on human rights, then chances of success in changing that country's human rights policies are difficult.\textsuperscript{241}

If state A has leverage over state B in terms of military or economic assistance, then B may be vulnerable to change its human rights policy. Another factor influencing vulnerability is the way that particular state being pressured views its own position. Both components are essential in bringing about change. If a state is concerned about the way it is perceived internationally, then that state is likely to be concerned about international pressure on human rights issues.\textsuperscript{242} Keck and Sikkink point out that the case of China is very different from other cases in which human rights have triumphed. “What is often missed,” Keck and Sikkink argue, “in the debate over the apparent ‘failure’ of human rights policy in China is that virtually none of the classical military and economic levers exist.”\textsuperscript{243} In other words, because the United States or the West does not provide aid to Beijing in military assistance or economic assistance, the West does not have an upper hand with Beijing.

Recently, Risse and Sikkink have stated that there may not be a possible theory explaining why states or actors comply with human rights. As they state: “it is not clear that a general theory of human rights change is possible, especially as we introduce non-state actors, including corporations, insurgent groups and even

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Risse} Risse and Sikkink, 1999.
\bibitem{Keck} Keck and Sikkink, 1998.
\bibitem{Keck} Keck and Sikkink, 1998.
\bibitem{Keck} Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 118; 208.
\end{thebibliography}
individual families into the equation.”244 They went on to add that a one size fits all approach is not viable in moving ahead with advancing human rights.245

Kent argues the lack of international pressure on China played a role in the Chinese government curtailing freedoms and repressing its population under the Hu-Wen leadership, as Hu and Wen realized they could get away with it internationally.246 Another contributing factor that Kent points to regarding the Chinese government’s repression under the Hu-Wen leadership was the US government’s desire to have China as a partner in pursuing terrorism, and thus the US did not strongly object to human rights abuses in China.247 Given her previous view on how the lack of international pressure on China provided the context for limiting freedoms in China, it is surprising that Kent then states that international pressure on China regarding civil and political rights (or physical integrity rights) in the 1990s and beyond did not achieve much. However, she argues that regarding economic and social rights, international pressure was effective, as she points to how both the IMF and the World Bank suggested that China embrace social spending to prevent the vulnerable in China from falling through the cracks in a privatizing economy.248

The authors of The Power of Human Rights (PoHR) find that socialization has been effective in promoting human rights in both 1) countries that allow for voicing

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244 2013: 276.
245 2013: 276.
246 2008: 93.
247 Kent, 2008: 93.
248 Kent, 2008: 95.
ideas both domestically and from international opinion, and in numerous countries that vary significantly in terms of culture, levels of development, and types of government. Moreover, the authors of PoHR stress the point that if governments state that they will abide by international human rights and ratify treaties on the issue, it is very difficult to go back and violate such human rights, as the country is on the path towards respect for human rights. While the case studies in PoHR recognize that states are significant regarding international human rights, the case studies argue that transnational advocacy networks are “the primary instigators of human rights change.” The two lead authors of PoHR, Risse and Ropp, state that the case studies in their book do not support the realist view that the pressure from Great Powers or powerful states is the essential factor in states adopting human rights policies.

Based on her large N data analysis of 145 countries from 1975-2000 regarding physical integrity rights, Emilie Hafner-Burton states that her findings, which she obtains by using the CIRI data set, regarding naming and shaming’s impact on states changing human rights practices is mixed. In short, some states disregard the naming and shaming and continue with human rights abuses and other governments improved human rights. Hafner-Burton examined naming and shaming campaigns by three non-state entities—an INGO (AI), the media (The

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249 Risse and Ropp, 1999: 262-263.
250 Risse and Ropp, 1999: 238.
251 Risse and Ropp, 1999: 248.
252 Risse and Ropp, 1999: 277.
253 1999: 268. It is often the case that leading countries or great powers do not place human rights as a greater priority over other foreign policy goals (Neumayer, 2005: 926).
254 2008: 689.
Economist and Newsweek) and UNCHR. According to her data analysis, she states that it tends to be the case that states that are named and shamed usually implement or engage in an improvement regarding political rights after the naming and shaming. However, it is uncommon for those states to eliminate or reduce terror. In fact, some states use more terror after the naming and shaming campaigns. She states that there are a number of reasons for this. “One is that, in the face of international pressures to reform, some leaders want improvements but have more capacity to pass and implement legislation protecting political rights than to stop terror.” Another reason is that with decentralization, some of the people carrying out acts of terror are outside of the direct supervision of the central government.

Matthew Krain focuses on the naming and shaming that transnational advocacy networks (TANs) carry out regarding government-sponsored genocides or polticides that were ongoing from 1976 to 2008. Based on his statistical analysis during those years, he states that naming and shaming campaigns by AI, the Western media, and the UN’s human rights regime did have a significant impact in reducing regarding genocides and politicides. In short, Krain argues that TANs have the potential, with their naming and shaming, to bring about an end to genocide or politicide. According to Krain, one reason why naming and shaming by human rights organizations, the media, and IGOs is effective is because it “frames

\[255\] 2008: 707.
\[256\] 2008: 707.
\[257\] 2008: 707.
\[258\] 2012: 574.
\[259\] 2012: 574.
perpetrators as violating international norms and as untrustworthy partners in future interactions.” For Krain, these are the conditions under which the rights-abusing state will change and act for the better: “Perpetrators will change their behavior if they cannot risk the loss of power, resources, allies, or legitimacy that inaction in the face of such condemnation would bring.”

Overall, the approach of naming and shaming is also of limited use for this dissertation, as China has strongly resisted numerous naming and shaming campaigns because of the perceived threat to CCP rule if it were to acquiesce in such naming and shaming campaigns. In other words, because the Chinese government is adamantly committed to advancing its preferences, which is explained by rational choice, regarding human rights issues, it is unwilling to compromise on such issues. There have been certain circumstances (such as WTO compliance) in which the Chinese government has been more willing to cooperate with international pressure because such issues are perceived as less threatening to CCP rule. In short, this dissertation argues that instead of focusing on sovereignty, naming and shaming, or any of the other approaches or theories mentioned as explanatory reasons for bringing about change in other states regarding human rights, the central question to ask regarding whether China will modify its actions on either international norms or human rights is: Is it perceived as threatening to CCP rule? Using rational choice, I explain how the Chinese government’s main priority is to remain in power and acts according to that preference. Similar with the relationship between domestic

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261 2012: 576.
politics and international politics for the topic of naming and shaming, it is important to consider Robert Putnam’s findings.

Two-level Game

Robert Putnam examines the Bonn summit conference of 1978 to explain how domestic policy changed because of such an international agreement.\(^\text{262}\) Without the international agreement, the domestic policy changes would probably not have happened.\(^\text{263}\) Thus, the Bonn Conference allowed for change in domestic policies of the states participating at the conference. Having said that about the role or importance of international pressure, domestic demand was also significant for this. If the domestic demand were not for this, then it would not have made it to the conference.\(^\text{264}\) In short, it was the combination of domestic and international that allowed for the Bonn agreement. Thus, Putnam argues that we need to examine the relationship between domestic and international—not just one being all-important. In his article, Putnam states “diplomats representing an entrenched dictatorship are less able than representatives of a democracy to claim credibly that domestic pressures preclude some disadvantageous deal.”\(^\text{265}\) Thus, he does not think that a repressive regime can make the case that, when at an international conference, it is concerned about a domestic backlash or domestic opinion. However, as I argue throughout this dissertation, the Chinese government is indeed concerned about domestic public opinion, even though it is an entrenched dictatorship.

\(^{262}\) 1988: 429.
\(^{263}\) 1988: 429.
\(^{264}\) 1988: 430.
\(^{265}\) 1988: 449.
According to Putnam, in a given country, interest groups seek to advance their agenda by lobbying the national government to go along with their ideas. Members of the government and politicians want to have such powerful interest groups on their side for support. That is the national level. Then, at the international level, a given government aims to advance such special interest desires.\textsuperscript{266} But at the same time, the particular government does not want problems to develop internationally because of such a push.\textsuperscript{267} Hence, this is the approach of a two-level game—national and international. The given government needs to take into account both domestic interest groups and avoid international problems arising.\textsuperscript{268} However, in my view, the Chinese situation does not fit neatly here with Putnam’s argument. As I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, the Chinese government is willing to incur problems at the international level if such problems are threatening to its existence. The Chinese government would much rather have conflict at the international level than the domestic level, as it acts to advance its main preference: to remain in power. Thus, Putnam’s two level game also does not fully explain the situation with how the Chinese government acts regarding human rights issues explored in this dissertation. One point that Putnam makes that is indeed very relevant for the case of China’s actions on human rights is how he argues that with the two-level game, in the event that the government leader does not please his domestic interest groups, there is the danger that his job may be in

\textsuperscript{266} 1988: 434.
\textsuperscript{267} 1988: 434.
\textsuperscript{268} 1988: 434.
jeopardy. In relating this to China, using rational choice, I argue that the CCP perceives acquiescing on human rights issues as a threat to CCP existence.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature and critically examined it regarding China’s approach to human rights. While IR theories and approaches such as realism, cosmopolitanism, and constructivism all offer some valid points regarding Chinese IR, those theories and approaches cannot fully explain China’s actions. Instead, I argue that rational choice’s emphasis on actors acting to advance their preferences is the most appropriate approach for explaining China’s actions on human rights explored in this dissertation. Since the Chinese government’s paramount objective is to remain in power, the Chinese government has acted in a manner to advance that preference. I also devoted appropriate space to the four main explanatory dimensions regarding China’s approach to human rights: Asian values; modernization theory; sovereignty; and international pressure. While some of those approaches do offer certain valid arguments regarding China, there are fundamental weaknesses with those approaches.

269 1988: 434.
Chapter 4: Historical context and human rights in China

Abstract

In this chapter, I examine a number of issues related to human rights in China, China’s authoritarian political system, and how China’s governance has evolved over the years regarding political openness and repression. This chapter has two main sections. In the first section, I focus on the historical context. Then in the second section, I focus on scholars who write about (1) China and human rights and (2) how PRC activists perceive human rights in China.

I. Historical context on China’s evolving role in global affairs

Context is very important for understanding IR and why states act the way they do in IR. The years 1972 (with US-China rapprochement) and 1979 (with the normalization of US-China relations) marked significant years for China in global affairs. Security was the primary factor for the US with its relations with China from 1972 to the end of the Cold War.270 Reflecting how security was the main issue when President Nixon began to engage China in the early 1970s, the US was willing to look beyond the awful horrors of human rights abuses committed in China with the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution in the context of the Cold War with the Soviet Union.271

270 See Foot and Walter, 2011: 18.
271 Chan, 2002: 1036.
Prior to China’s reforms in the late 1970s, China was unwilling to join multilateral organizations due to sovereignty issues.\textsuperscript{272} With Deng’s ascendancy in China in the late 1970s, there was a dramatic change in China’s involvement in IOs. In 1980, for example, China joined both the IMF and World Bank. From 1979 to 1981, China was an observer at UNCHR sessions. Then, in 1982, China became a member of the UN Human Rights Commission. In its quest to increase international trade and improve its economy, the Chinese government applied for WTO membership in 1986, and negotiations lasted for 15 years before China was admitted in 2002.\textsuperscript{273} As for international trade and financial regulation, the Chinese government has demonstrated a willingness to accept regulations, despite the cost to domestic firms that are not up to par with foreign MNCs. Since some domestic companies are not as advanced as MNCs, such domestic companies are not in a position of strength and risk going out of business.\textsuperscript{274} Nonetheless, the Chinese government views this as a necessary step to overall advance economically, even though there will be pains for such domestic firms.\textsuperscript{275} Also, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, the sovereignty issue does a poor job in examining China’s actions, as was just mentioned the Chinese government accepted domestic economic regulations because of the main goal of joining the WTO. If the Chinese government were a consistent supporter of always adhering to sovereignty, it would not have given in on such an issue. Thus, certain times the Chinese government uses

\textsuperscript{272} Saunders, 2008: 132.  
\textsuperscript{273} See Kent, 2004: 530.  
\textsuperscript{274} Foot and Walter, 2011: 285.  
\textsuperscript{275} Foot and Walter, 2011: 285.
sovereignty to its political advantage when it is important and does not emphasize it when less important.

In 2004 and 2005, Beijing was concerned about both the potential impact of the revolutions sweeping the Caucasus and the Bush administration's desire to spread democracy globally. The Chinese government therefore viewed this as a potential threat to CCP rule. Due to such a threat level, it is in this 2004-2005 international context that China's foreign policy embraced more of a supportive position towards dictators than it had just a few years prior under Jiang Zemin. In keeping with the support for dictators in the mid-2000s, in July 2005, when Robert Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe, was under tremendous international criticism for the demolition of the living areas in which people who did not support him lived, Mugabe was welcomed on a state visit to China. Thus, Beijing clearly signaled that it was not concerned about the international criticism surrounding Mugabe's human rights practices. For the Chinese government, maintaining CCP rule was—and is—more important than adhering to Western views on such issues stated above.

China's strong support for pariah states, however, started to change in 2005. In September 2005, when Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick used the phrase "responsible stakeholder" to describe Chinese international relations, this phrase and message by the US government was both well received by Beijing and calmed a

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276 Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small, 2008: 42. The Chinese government is very apprehensive about democracy spreading around the globe, as that may have an impact on China's domestic politics (see Ferguson, 2012: 215)
277 Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small, 2008: 42.
278 Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small, 2008: 42.
previously nervous Beijing about the potential US agenda for democratization globally.\textsuperscript{279} With the US government using the phrase “responsible stakeholder” to describe China, Washington signaled that it had limited objectives for China, namely, cooperation regarding specific pariah states such as North Korea and Iran regarding the nuclear weapons situation and with Sudan.\textsuperscript{280} In the aftermath of Hu Jintao’s April 2006 visit at the White House, the Chinese government realized that since things were not going well for the US government in the Middle East, the US government needed China’s help internationally. Thus, this resulted in Beijing being less concerned about the US government aiming to spread democracy globally and thus more opportunities for cooperation with the US. China could then focus on its domestic priorities.\textsuperscript{281} In short, this example here adequately supports my main argument in this dissertation of the perceived threat level to CCP rule determining the way the Chinese government reacts to international events. If the Chinese government perceives a potential threat to CCP existence, it will react with significant concern and very little, if any, interest in international cooperation. However, if the Chinese government does not perceive a threat level to CCP rule, then the Chinese government is significantly more interested in international cooperation.

China’s position on humanitarian intervention has evolved considerably in recent years, though not to the level of support that many in the West would like. In reflecting this improved change, in 2010, of the five permanent UN Security Council

\textsuperscript{279} Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small, 2008: 43.
\textsuperscript{280} Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small, 2008: 43.
\textsuperscript{281} Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small, 2008: 43.
members, China had the highest percentage of UN Peacekeeping forces. This is a dramatic change from the days of Mao. Under Mao, the Chinese government viewed UN peacekeeping as the US and the USSR exploiting other sovereign states with little power.\textsuperscript{282} Under the new willingness to commit itself to UNPKOs, there are certain conditions, however, that must be met in order for China to engage in peacekeeping operations. If China is to intervene in another country for humanitarian purposes, it wants the consent of the host country.\textsuperscript{283} Moreover, for the Chinese government, regional IOs, and the UN Security Council should work together in such an intervention.\textsuperscript{284} Thus, there needs to be broad action for China to sign off on a humanitarian intervention. Nonetheless, China’s acceptance of humanitarian intervention represents a dramatic change since the days of Mao. This Chinese position on requiring the host country to sign off on allowing outside forces to intervene fits with China’s concern about preventing any outside forces from intervening in places such as Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang for humanitarian purposes. Thus, as I argue in this dissertation by using rational choice, China’s actions here also reveal the pattern that China acts on human rights based on the perceived threat to CCP rule. Even China’s pattern here on humanitarian intervention fits that pattern.

\textit{The vitality of the CCP}

\textsuperscript{282} Lee, et al., 2012.
\textsuperscript{283} Shih and Huang, 2013; Lee, et al., 2012.
\textsuperscript{284} Lee, et al., 2012.
Recently, numerous scholars have argued that the CCP will implode. In the case of Gordon Chang, with his 2001 book, *The Coming Collapse of China*, he predicted that by 2011 the PRC would collapse. Then, when that did not happen in 2011, he stated that it would collapse in the year following year, 2012. David Shambaugh, a much less polemical figure on China than Chang, argued in March of 2015 that Xi’s aggressive actions in China are moving towards an implosion for the CCP. In 1996, Henry Rowen argued that by 2015 China would rank as Partly Free according to Freedom House criteria. In 2007, Rowen, in embracing modernization theory regarding China, still made the case for 2015. Rowen also argued in 2007 that so long as China’s economy continues achieving strong growth and its educational system also continues with progress, by 2025 China would receive the Freedom House ranking of Free. As I demonstrated with my chart earlier in this dissertation, modernization theory does a poor job in explaining the situation in China, as China’s massive increase in both per capita GDP and FDI have coincided with a worsening of human rights abuses in the country.

In contrast to the predictions by scholars stated above, the CCP appears to be doing well in China. There are many Chinese who want to join the CCP in order to move up the socioeconomic ladder and thus view the Party as a social escalator. Being a CCP member allows for advantages over others who are not Party

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287 2007: 38.
288 2007: 38.
289 2007: 38.
members. According to government data, there were 82 million members of the CCP as of 2011. Many in China support the CCP and view it with legitimacy because of the strong economic growth that it has presided over. An additional source of legitimacy for the CCP, especially for Mao, is that it ended the Century of Humiliation. Thus, there are both historical factors and current factors for the legitimacy the CCP has in China. Recently, however, Nathan has expressed concern regarding the resiliency of the CCP. According to Nathan, “The consensus is stronger than at any time since the 1989 Tiananmen crisis that the resilience of the authoritarian regime in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) is approaching its limits.” Nathan states that due to the Internet and social media, Chinese have access to and are aware of political issues and the status of those pushing for reform. According to Nathan, the reason why the CCP acts the way it does domestically is due to the desire to be perceived as legitimate and reacting quickly to the needs of its people. “The apparent goal,” Nathan states, “is to build a form of one-party rule that people will accept as responsive and legitimate.” For example, Nathan states that the CCP leaders view Singapore as a model for achieving this kind of political system. Regarding the CCP’s desire to be viewed as legitimate and interested in meeting the needs of its people, combined with its

290 Zhao, 2003: 347. For more on this point of the benefits of joining the Party, see Bruce Dickson’s Red Capitalists in China.
292 2013: 20.
293 2013: 22.
294 2013: 23.
295 2013: 23.
calculations reflected in its strategic actions, the CCP has signed numerous international human rights conventions.

*China's participation with international human rights conventions*

Of the twenty seven international human rights conventions that China is a part of, here is a list of the leading international human rights treaties that China has signed and/or ratified: 1) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (signed and ratified); 2) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (signed but did not ratify); 3) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (signed and ratified); 4) United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (signed and ratified); 5) Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (signed and ratified); 6) Convention on the Rights of the Child (signed and ratified); 6) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts (signed but did not ratify); 7) Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (ratified but never signed); and 8) Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (signed and ratified).

Three of the major international human rights treaties are: 1) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 2) the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment of Punishment (CAT), and 3) the International Covenant on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). China has not ratified the ICCPR, though it did sign it. The ICCPR focuses
on physical integrity rights. Regarding the ICCPR and the ICESCR, which China ratified in March 2001, there are significant differences. The ICESCR allows for more leeway for states to not fully comply with it.\(^{296}\) Thus, this treaty is more difficult to measure regarding compliance. It is very telling that the Chinese government has not ratified two leading international human rights treaties: ICCPR and CAT. Those two treaties are the main treaties for physical integrity rights or civil and political rights. Thus, the Chinese government is very concerned about any potential threat to CCP rule and is cautious about committing itself on paper to such international human rights treaties.

Some scholars argue that China’s signing and ratification of international human rights treaties is significant and others argue that it is not. In focusing on China’s role in the international human rights regime broadly and China’s concern about its international image, Sceats and Breslin state: “China’s ratification of core international human rights treaties and its record of participation in the Human Rights Council demonstrate that it wishes to be perceived as accepting the legitimacy of the international human rights system and, broadly, the norms on which it is based.”\(^{297}\) Li Li, a PRC researcher at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, is critical of how some Western states have criticized China regarding human rights.\(^ {298}\) Li regards the Chinese government’s signing of the two leading international human rights instruments—the ICCPR and the ICESCR—as

\(^{296}\) See Keith, 1999: 97.
\(^{297}\) 2012: 55.
\(^{298}\) 2005: 80-81.
very significant.\textsuperscript{299} In Li's view, simply signing these two treaties should have been sufficient to settle international criticism of China regarding human rights.\textsuperscript{300} However, contrary to Li's view, even though a state signs a human rights treaty, it does not mean that particular state will enact pro-human rights policies or practices. On that topic, Neumayer states that based on his statistical analysis there is not a simple yes or no regarding the question of ratifying human rights treaties resulting in an improvement in human rights.\textsuperscript{301} For example, in non-democracies and in places where civil society is lacking, ratifying a human rights treaty does not improve human rights. In fact, it can actually worsen human rights.\textsuperscript{302} But in countries with a vibrant civil society, then human rights ratification is beneficial for the country's human rights practice.\textsuperscript{303}

\textit{II. Scholars on China and human rights}

Few scholars\textsuperscript{304} have specifically focused on China's role in the international human rights regime. As Samuel Kim states, "One of the most novel but generally overlooked aspects of China's post-Cold War international relations is high-profile human rights diplomacy."\textsuperscript{305} This section examines how scholars have written about China's role in the international human rights regime or its actions in the UN generally on human rights issues.

\textsuperscript{299} 2005: 80-81.
\textsuperscript{300} 2005: 81.
\textsuperscript{301} 2005: 950.
\textsuperscript{302} 2005: 950.
\textsuperscript{303} 2005: 950.
\textsuperscript{305} 2000: 129.
Although he does not specifically focus on China’s involvement in the human rights regime, Joel Wuthnow’s focus is relevant here, as he examines the issue of core interests for the Chinese government and its actions on human rights issues in the UNSC. In focusing on China’s actions in the UNSC, Wuthnow examines China’s occasional support for taking action against dictatorships and the variance in China’s approach regarding this topic. For example, China took action in the UNSC to target Libya (though it later regretted doing so) and North Korea on the one hand, and on the other hand did not take action against Burma or Syria. In Wuthnow’s view, China will go along with other states in the UNSC if China’s core interests are secure. Thus, my argument in which I use rational choice to explain Chinese government action regarding the potential threat level to CCP rule is similar with Wuthnow’s argument about China’s actions in the UNSC.

Writing in 1999, Samuel Kim was critical of China’s role in UNHRC and the UN’s human rights regime in general. Kim regarded China’s actions on human rights in the UN as a “divide-and-conquer human rights diplomacy.” Kim points out that while China has stated it is prepared to engage in a dialogue in the UN human rights regime regarding human rights, in practice the Chinese government has hindered resolutions being introduced. If countries do not go along with China on human rights in the UN, development aid to developing countries may not
continue and contracts with developed countries may not continue.\textsuperscript{311} In short, Kim argues that the Chinese government uses coercive diplomacy in the UN with both developing and developed countries.\textsuperscript{312} Kim’s argument about China’s actions in the UNSC is very relevant for my argument overall in this dissertation: Kim argues that the Chinese government’s actions in the UNSC are always about potential ramifications regarding Tibet and Taiwan.\textsuperscript{313} Thus, for Kim, the Chinese government does not want to do anything in the UNSC that may result in a threat to CCP rule, Tibet, or any pro-independence of Taiwan, which is also a threat to the CCP.

Kim argues that the Chinese government is actively involved in world human rights political issues.\textsuperscript{314} Despite such active involvement in human rights issues globally, Kim is not optimistic about how such participation has improved China’s stance on human rights. Kim points out that the Chinese government’s emphasis on a non-universal approach to human rights and one that focuses on development is something that resonates with non-democracies.\textsuperscript{315} In contrast to Li Li’s argument examined before, Kim argues that China’s involvement in the international human rights regime and China’s signing of ample international human rights instruments have done very little in terms of having a positive impact on China moving away from a staunch emphasis on sovereignty regarding human rights issues. As Kim states, “Beijing’s participation in the international human rights regime for nearly

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\textsuperscript{311} Kim, 1999: 71.
\textsuperscript{312} 1999: 71.
\textsuperscript{313} 1999: 65.
\textsuperscript{314} 2000: 129.
\textsuperscript{315} 2000: 134.
two decades and accession to seventeen human rights treaties and signing of the
two keystone covenants notwithstanding, there is no hard evidence yet of any
fundamental learning or paradigmatic shift from the sovereignty-bound cultural and
developmental relativism to the sovereignty-free universalism of human rights.”

According to Andrew Nathan, China most likely joined the international
human rights regime because of its desire to advance in the UNSC. Therefore, joining
the international human rights regime was necessary, as it is important to be
involved in all UN agencies. Nathan argues that in the past twenty-five years,
China has had a significant impact on the operations of the international human
rights regime, pointing to China’s role in UNHRC with avoiding country-specific
criticism. Nathan argues that China’s level of or willingness to comply with some
international regimes and not with others is due to cost-benefit analysis on the part
of the Chinese government, which Nathan argues reflects realism and
institutionalism regarding compliance—not constructivism. Nathan states that it
does not seem like the Chinese government is focused on eliminating the
international human rights regime; instead, the Chinese goal is to advance its
interests within the regime.

Chen Dingding, a PRC scholar who teaches at the University of Macau,
examines three time periods regarding China’s participation in the international

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316 2000: 152.
318 2015: 7-8.
319 2015: 15-16.
320 2015: 11.
information from three types of sources: “(i) official statements of Chinese leaders and government; (ii) scholarly works on China’s approach to the international human rights system; and (iii) HR policies adopted by the Chinese government.”

According to Chen, the evidence from the three sources allows for a comprehensive view regarding China’s statements and practices on international human rights.

Chen argues that since 1978 China has done much to participate in international human rights, as he points to Chinese involvement in the UN on human rights issues, Chinese government statements on human rights, Chinese academics writing about the importance of participating in international human rights institutions, and China signing seven international human rights treaties in the 1980s. According to Chen, China is willing to engage in dialogue and work with other states and non-state actors on international human rights. While Chen states that “China has selectively embraced international human rights norms, choosing those that facilitate economic development and help maintain social stability,” he also provided a positive assessment about China and human rights: “the country has on the whole acknowledged the legitimacy of the international human rights regime and its obligations to fulfill human rights protection.”

Katrin Kinzelbach examines the statements of Chinese government officials in three UN bodies (the Commission on Human Rights; the Human Rights Council; and the UNGA) regarding human rights from 2000 to 2010. Kinzelbach did not

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322 2009: 400.
323 2009: 400.
325 2009: 403.
326 2009: 404.
focus on the way China voted in the UN on human rights issues. In her attempt to answer the question regarding whether or not China will provide an alternative to international norms on human rights, Kinzelbach states that from 2000 to 2010, “Chinese politicians and diplomats have emphatically endorsed the global validity of international human rights.”327 Having said that, Kinzelbach provides some words of caution regarding China as a status quo power on issues of international human rights. In her view, “China’s official language on international human rights coherently challenges the current [international human rights] regime despite the fact that Beijing’s positions remain, to a large extent, dominated by a self-defensive approach.”328

In reflecting the argument that China is ascending and other states are acquiescing in China’s requests and interests, there is evidence that the US government, in exchange for Beijing allowing Uyghur dissident Rebiya Kadeer to leave China for the US, did not sponsor a 2005 UNCHR resolution critical of China.329 Many countries are unwilling to challenge China on human rights issues, and this is manifested in the ways in which many state officials at the UN do not denounce China on human rights issues.330 This lack of will to challenge China adds to China’s power globally on issues related to human rights. Thus, China is gaining ground in the debate over human rights at the UN. For example, Kinzelbach points out on leading human rights issues such as “unconditional entitlement, international standards and country-specific monitoring,” China has been gaining momentum at

327 2012: 306.
328 2012: 301.
329 see Kinzelbach, 2013: 174.
the UN on those issues, as China does not advocate for those positions.\textsuperscript{331} From a similar cloth as Kinzelbach, Fullilove argues, “Through the approach it has taken in the HRC, the old Commission on Human Rights, the Security Council, and the General Assembly, China has played a critical role in wearing down Western capitals on human rights issues and pushing human rights further to the periphery of UN debate.”\textsuperscript{332} Thus, he does not think China has been productive for human rights in the UN.

According to Ming Wan, who received his undergraduate degree in the PRC and currently teaches in the US, since the reform and opening, economic factors account for both the Chinese government’s embrace of or lean towards international human rights and enacting laws in China regarding human rights, as such changes are necessary in order to have economic progress.\textsuperscript{333} In order to achieve the economic reforms that Deng Xiaoping sought, a legal system was necessary.\textsuperscript{334} According to Wan, it was because of Chinese actions that human rights laws have developed in China—not primarily because of international factors.\textsuperscript{335} Since the Chinese government has been devoted to economic development, but not political development, this accounts for the variance in terms of strong economic development but weak political development. Moreover, due to the Chinese government’s focus on economic development, the Chinese government has been more willing to embrace international trade policies and laws than it has regarding

\textsuperscript{331} 2012: 332.
\textsuperscript{332} 2011: 78.
\textsuperscript{333} Wan, 2007: 727, 738.
\textsuperscript{334} Wan, 2007: 738.
\textsuperscript{335} Wan, 2007: 738.
international human rights.\textsuperscript{336} For example, the Chinese government has been committed to international trade laws and the WTO and having domestic laws match with international laws regarding trade.\textsuperscript{337} In short, the Chinese government is willing to embrace some legal reforms if it is likely to be beneficial to the Chinese economy. The Chinese government is significantly more willing to cooperate regarding international laws on economic issues than international human rights laws. As Wan states: “full compliance with international human rights laws needs genuine political reform, which the Chinese party state has steadfastly refused to do.”\textsuperscript{338}

I largely agree with Wuthnow, Kim, Nathan, and Ming Wan on China’s calculated actions on international human rights issues. As I have argued throughout the dissertation by using rational choice’s emphasis that actors act to advance their preferences, the Chinese government is very concerned about potential threats to CCP rule and acts based upon such perceived threats. This argument is very relevant for policy implications. When the Chinese government does not perceive any threats, we should expect more international cooperation by China, as I have pointed out throughout this dissertation. Conversely, when it perceives such international cooperation as threatening, we should expect much resistance.

\textit{Why UNGA Voting is Important and Significance of IOs}

\textsuperscript{336} Wan, 2007: 742.
\textsuperscript{337} Wan, 2007: 742.
\textsuperscript{338} 2007: 742.
Regarding IR theory and the UN, the way one views the UN largely depends on the IR theory one espouses. In this dissertation, I view IOs, and the UN in particular, as significant bodies in international politics, as IOs have played a large role in recent IR.\textsuperscript{339} IOs have taken on responsibilities that were exclusively reserved for states, such as trade and security. States aim to develop IOs because such IOs can help states in furthering issues on the global level, such as economic, security, or environmental affairs.\textsuperscript{340} States work together to seek out both common ground and to advance their own interests with the creation of such institutions.\textsuperscript{341} States go along with the WTO’s policies and dispute settlement proceedings because there is more to gain by being in the WTO than not, as China’s interest in joining the WTO demonstrates.

Realists, such as John Mearsheimer,\textsuperscript{342} have long argued that such international institutions are insignificant in world politics. Others from liberal institutionalism and other approaches have argued that the UN is important. In particular, numerous scholars have argued that the UNGA is a significant institution to study when examining international politics.\textsuperscript{343} The UNGA provides the only opportunity where the vast majority of countries debate and vote on many important global issues,\textsuperscript{344} and voting in the General Assembly reveals countries’

\textsuperscript{339} See Koremenos et al., 2001: 761.
\textsuperscript{340} Koremenos et al., 2001: 762.
\textsuperscript{341} Koremenos et al., 2001:766.
\textsuperscript{342} See Mearsheimer, 1994.
\textsuperscript{344} E.g., Voeten, 2000: 185-186
individual and collective preferences on these salient issues.\textsuperscript{345} For example, Costa-Buranelli argues that: “to vote for a specific [UNGA] resolution or on a specific theme is not only a reflection of a state’s interests, but it may well represent a support/endorsement for a given norm/rule in international relations as well.”\textsuperscript{346} Furthermore, countries take UNGA resolutions seriously,\textsuperscript{347} and UNGA decisions can generate a significant impact.\textsuperscript{348} Marin-Bosch states, “A single isolated vote does not tell us much about a country’s policy, but a study of its cumulative voting record can be most revealing, and a comparison of the votes cast by member states can lead to a better understanding of the UN.”\textsuperscript{349} According to Voeten, the UNGA “is the only forum in which a large number of states meet and vote on a regular basis on issues concerning the international community.”\textsuperscript{350} Kim and Russett state: “The General Assembly offers a unique context in which to study post-Cold War international politics, providing a great deal of information about the issues most salient to its member states and about their preferences.”\textsuperscript{351} Marin-Bosch states that on UNGA votes/resolutions: “member states take General Assembly resolutions seriously.”\textsuperscript{352} Stone states: “UN voting is a good measure of a country’s general diplomatic posture.”\textsuperscript{353} As Holloway states: “UN voting is important for showing how world

\textsuperscript{346} 2014: 133.  
\textsuperscript{347} E.g., Marin-Bosch, 1987: 705.  
\textsuperscript{348} E.g., Dixon, 1981: 50.  
\textsuperscript{349} 1987: 705.  
\textsuperscript{350} Voeten, 2000: 185-186.  
\textsuperscript{351} Kim and Russett, 1997: 29.  
\textsuperscript{352} 1987: 705.  
\textsuperscript{353} 2004: 587.
politics is reflected in that body.”

In contrast to Mearshemier and other realists who espouse his views on the insignificance of IOs, I aligned myself with the previous scholars who argue that IOs, and the UN in particular, are important bodies to examine for global politics. In the paragraphs below, I present two concrete examples illustrating why it is important to examine UNGA voting: 1) generating norms and 2) the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a catalyst for state action.

Voting decisions in the UNGA help to generate international norms. When discussing how international human rights norms affect countries’ human rights practices, Risse and Sikkink argue, “international law and international organizations are still the primary vehicles for stating community norms and for collective legitimation.”

Similarly, Sugiyama proposes that IOs play a central role in creating new norms that are then adopted by states at the domestic level. One explanation suggests that since people with strong specific knowledge work for IOs, such IOs are able to influence others with the IOs agenda. In addition, reforms on human rights issues have been implemented in some cases because country leaders are concerned about how they are perceived by other fellow leaders of countries.

When compared to other IOs, the UN has its advantages in generating norms. The UNGA is more inclusive and equitable than the other leading IOs, since it has the largest membership and adopts a one country, one vote policy. In the UNGA, it is the

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355 1999, 8.
356 2011, 40.
358 Risse and Sikkink, 1999: 8.
majority of world countries that decide the agenda and the voting outcome, compared to other IOs, such as the IMF, that use weighted voting.\textsuperscript{359} As a result, decisions reached in the UNGA are more likely to be perceived as legitimate.

The MDGs serve as a good example of how the UN can shape state actions. It is widely accepted that fighting poverty is a critical step in improving economic, cultural, and social rights. The UN’s holistic approach in tackling poverty in the 1990s, such as focusing on education, health, food, and employment opportunities, has significantly impacted the focus of the MDGs.\textsuperscript{360} The MDGs examine many facets of life, instead of treating poverty as not having enough income. In furthering the optimistic outlook on tackling poverty that has been generated as a result of the MDGs, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon regards the MDGs as “the most successful global anti-poverty push in history.”\textsuperscript{361}

\textit{Evolution of norms and human rights}

In the aftermath of WWII, two main norms developed—self-determination and human rights.\textsuperscript{362} In the post WWII context, the USSR sought to advance its outlook on human rights—economic and social. The UN, which has focused on human rights from its inception, provided the foundation for international human rights based on international law with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

\textsuperscript{359} E.g., Volgy, Frazier and Ingersoll, 2003: 55.
\textsuperscript{360} Stein and Horn, 2012: 664.
\textsuperscript{361} Millennium Development Goals Report, 2013: 3.
\textsuperscript{362} Donnelly, 1998: 11. It is important to point out that the international human rights regime is based on certain norms that are not always shared.
(UDHR), 1948.\textsuperscript{363} In addition, UDHR was to serve as a model to advance norms, which are not internationally binding.\textsuperscript{364} Jack Donnelly argues that since the end of the Cold War, significant progress has been made on the importance of human rights in international relations.\textsuperscript{365} To support his argument, Donnelly points to the international reaction to the Chinese government’s crushing of the pro-democracy movement in 1989 as a turning point in the way human rights were viewed.\textsuperscript{366}

During the Cold War, the US and the USSR supported international elections so long as the outcome suited their interests. Also during the Cold War, the bulk of leaders from developing countries were not enthusiastic about elections,\textsuperscript{367} as the leaders did not view the elections as allowing for legitimacy.

\textit{Human rights in China}

Though there is a general consensus that the pervasiveness of the state has lessened in China since the days of Mao, there is strong disagreement regarding the extent to which political and civil rights in China are respected by the government. In short, there is not a consensus on the current status of civil society, or if it even exists, in China. There is much agreement that the gains achieved in political reform since the reform and opening have been significantly limited under Xi Jinping. Since the focus of this dissertation ends in 2012, a detailed examination of the Xi era is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

\textsuperscript{363} See Risse and Ropp, 1999: 234.  
\textsuperscript{364} Risse and Sikkink, 1999: 1.  
\textsuperscript{365} 1998: 20.  
\textsuperscript{366} Donnelly, 1998: 17.  
\textsuperscript{367} Donnelly, 1998: 19.
The Optimistic Camp on civil society in China

Numerous scholars have provided an optimistic assessment regarding how civil society has evolved in China or improved since Mao. Yangzi Sima, for example, argues that civil society in China has developed due to: 1) increased political openness; 2) the economic reform and opening; 3) “China’s increasingly complex and differentiated social fabric also nourished the development of the non-governmental sector.” Last, 4) globalization and increased affluence. While the bulk of NGOs in China are not antagonistic towards the government, Shieh and Deng (Deng is a PRC scholar who teaches at Tsinghua) present an optimistic view on the emergence of NGOs in China, pointing to the autonomy non-state actors in China were provided with during the May 2008 Sichuan earthquake. In the following day of the Sichuan earthquake, over 100 NGOs worked together in bringing relief to those in need, which reflects the domestic openness that has occurred in China. Also emphasizing the positive development in China in this regard, Cheng Li (who grew up in the PRC and moved to the US for graduate training and is now affiliated with the Brookings Institution) provided a positive picture of the role of NGOs in Chinese society. In Cheng Li’s view, “the growing presence of teahouses, Internet cafes, karaoke bars, discoclubs, fan clubs, private bookstores, art

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369 2011: 480.  
370 2011: 480.  
373 Yang, 2008.  
374 2008: 10-11.
galleries, fitness centers, private salons, home churches, and private theaters all over China” have been positive for China’s political openness.\textsuperscript{375} The focus of a given NGO is significant for how that NGO will develop, as some NGOs have developed much better than others.\textsuperscript{376} For example, NGOs focusing on the environment or public health have developed significantly better than religious NGOs.\textsuperscript{377}

In her article on the last twenty years in China, Jessica Teets argues that the Chinese government has provided space for civil society to develop.\textsuperscript{378} Thus, she argues that while the Chinese government does not want the development of civil society to result in democratization, civil society in China has been playing a role with improved governance. This improved governance, she argues, plays out well with the populous, which then provides the CCP with high marks.\textsuperscript{379} Teets argues that this consultative authoritarianism in China is different from the previous corporatist examples, as the former allows for social pluralism.\textsuperscript{380} These civil society groups in China have their own staff workers, decide their projects, and have

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{375} 2008: 11. On the topic of teahouses, when asked by Ian Johnson what makes Sichuan a unique place for having such a large number of dissidents, given that there are other places in China more economically advanced than Sichuan, Ran Yunfei, a PRC citizen and public intellectual, stated that there are a number of reasons that account for this. “There is this teahouse culture here—you have these places where you can meet publicly.” This is something different from other cites in China, he stated. Ran also added that Sichuan is far from Beijing (Johnson, 2012: “Learning How to Argue: An Interview with Ran Yunfei.”)

\textsuperscript{376} Wilson, 2012: 555

\textsuperscript{377} Wilson, 2012: 555.

\textsuperscript{378} Teets, 2013: 19.

\textsuperscript{379} Teets, 2013: 20–21. Villagers in China tend to blame local leaders for what they view as poor local economic conditions and provide the central government in China with high marks for national economic performance (see Kennedy, 2010: 182). Numerous scholars have pointed out that the Chinese government enjoys strong support in China (see Kennedy, 2010: 182)

\textsuperscript{380} 2013: 33.}
independent funding.\textsuperscript{381} The distinction between consultative authoritarianism and corporatism is significant. With corporatism, the government allows for only one entity or one non-state actor or organization to focus on a given topic or area.\textsuperscript{382} As a result, all other non-state actors not of that group are shut out from that area or focus, which allows for strong government control, as the government knows that it is only one organization that they are working with.\textsuperscript{383} Starting in the early 2000s in China, numerous organizations for the same focus emerged. Teets recognizes that the situation of civil society actors gaining ground in China is not monolithic; instead, it varies from place to place within China.\textsuperscript{384} Nonetheless, the situation is improving nationally for civil society in China with this consultative authoritarianism.\textsuperscript{385}

Reflecting the overall positive assessment of China’s evolution in allowing for more space for its people, numerous scholars are optimistic about the future of the country. Suisheng Zhao, who received undergraduate and graduate degrees in the PRC but now teaches at the University of Denver, argues that in post-Mao China, the governing of the country has been moving in the direction on rule of law.\textsuperscript{386} Zhao provides an optimistic note for China’s future political development: “recent political liberalization, together with the change in one-party rule, may slowly lay a foundation for democratization.”\textsuperscript{387}

\textsuperscript{381} 2013: 33.  
\textsuperscript{382} Teets, 2013: 33.  
\textsuperscript{383} 2013: 33.  
\textsuperscript{384} 2013: 35.  
\textsuperscript{385} Teets, 2013: 35.  
\textsuperscript{386} 2006: 230.  
\textsuperscript{387} 2006: ix
Based on the way Xi Jinping has been governing, it seems that the gains made by civil society actors in recent decades have been scaled back. The weiquan community, which I have focused on in this dissertation, is a clear example regarding this lack of progress in recent years. In order for rule of law to advance in China, it is essential that such weiquan lawyers are able to have the political space to advance such an agenda. However, weiquan lawyers have not been provided with any room to pursue their agenda in the Xi Jinping years. Thus, as of the time of this dissertation, it does not look like civil society is advancing in China. In my view, it does not appear that there will be any fundamental political change in China anytime soon. Given that physical integrity rights in China have worsened in recent years, as I demonstrated with the chart on per capita GDP and FDI, it does not provide for an optimistic outlook on the political evolution in China.

_Scholars on the lack of civil society and democratization in China_

As stated previously, there is not a consensus regarding the current status of civil society or how civil society has evolved since the reform and opening. This section provides views from scholars and Chinese dissidents on the problems civil society faces in China. Numerous scholars have either argued that A) civil society is lacking in China, B) the Chinese government has aimed to hinder civil society, C)
the government is hindering democratization, or D) that China will not democratize any time soon. I align myself more with scholars in this camp on the lack of civil society and democratization in China than with the camp of scholars who are optimistic on civil society in China. Also, some of these scholars argue that the Chinese government makes calculated decisions on policies according to the threat level to CCP rule. In other words, these scholars argue that, as I have argued in this dissertation by using rational choice’s emphasis that actors act in a manner to advance their preferences, the Chinese government implements policies in order to remain in power.

On the topic of the impact of the reform and opening, Gallagher argues that the reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping with the reform and opening actually benefited the Chinese government, has not helped the development of civil society, and has hindered political openness.390 “In opening its borders to large flows of foreign capital,” Gallagher argues, “China’s communist leaders have made growth and globalization work for them.”391 Thus, Gallagher argues that it is the CCP that has benefited from the reform and opening.

Andrew Jacobs, The New York Times’ China correspondent, recently stated that there has been a fundamental change for the worse under Xi Jinping that we have not seen in the post-1978 context in China.392 This new change has not been well received by international actors (both private enterprise and non-profits) who have been operating in China. Jacobs offers a rather bleak outlook on the current

392 Jacobs, 2015.
political climate in China under Xi Jinping: “there is concern that after three decades of increasing openness, China has concluded that it no longer needs what the outside world has to offer and is beginning to close its door.”\textsuperscript{393} Since this dissertation focuses on China’s actions in the UNGA from 1971 to 2012, a detailed analysis of the Xi Jinping era and its crackdown on dissident is beyond the scope of the dissertation.

According to Joseph Fewsmith, the CCP has been implementing political change in order to stay in power.\textsuperscript{394} In his view, since the CCP does not want to give up complete power, it aims to adapt to the current context in order to remain in power.\textsuperscript{395} Dorothy Solinger argued that instead of embracing democratization, the CCP is embracing “elitism.”\textsuperscript{396} Richard McGregor commented, “China has long known something that many in developed countries are only now beginning to grasp, that the Chinese Communist Party and its leaders have never wanted to be the West when they grow up.”\textsuperscript{397}

Ann Kent argues the Chinese government decided to crackdown domestically and prevent anything domestically that could hinder the 2008 Beijing Games.\textsuperscript{398} With the Beijing Games, the Chinese government detained key activists in the run-up to the Games, such as Teng Biao, a lawyer and human rights activist, Yang Chunlin, a land rights activist, and Hu Jia, an HIV/AIDS activist. In the context of the

\textsuperscript{393} Jacobs, 2015. Freedom House has also recently released various reports on the dire situation of political and civil rights in China. For more on this, see https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/china#.Vbfg_UvtamY
\textsuperscript{394} Fewsmith 2008: 224.
\textsuperscript{395} Fewsmith, 2008: 224.
\textsuperscript{396} Solinger, 2008: 261.
\textsuperscript{397} McGregor, 2010: 273.
\textsuperscript{398} 2008: 96.
years running up to the 2008 Beijing Games, Kent states that the CCP made a calculated decision in limiting one category of human rights (civil and political rights) and attempting to improve the other category of human rights (economic and social): “To China’s leaders, it made more sense to suppress citizens’ civil and political rights, and, at the same time, to expand their economic and social rights.” Kent states that this is not a novelty in the PRC, as it was the guiding principles from 1949 to 1978. Kent argues that this shift in China’s policy from the focus on total GDP growth to more equitable GDP growth “was derived from pragmatic concerns about social unrest rather than from ideological scruples.” Thus, the Chinese government acted because of the perceived potential threat level to its existence, which is the main argument that I advance in this dissertation.

Jean-Philippe Béjá argues that civil society in China is not on the same level of the aggressive civil society in Poland in the 1970s or Czechoslovakia of the 1980s. Béjá argues that just because civil society in China is emerging, we should not automatically expect democratization. Moreover, we should not equally anticipate that China’s political development will evolve along the lines of Eastern

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399 2008: 96.
400 2008: 96.
401 Kent, 95. Since 1978, China has much experience with local officials and local level experimentation with a myriad number of economic reforms (Heilman, 2008: 1). Thus, we see a system of federalism or decentralization of the economy in China. If economic policies have worked well at the local level, national figures have tended to embrace such policies and argued such policies should be implemented elsewhere in China (Heilman, 2008: 2). Due to decentralization in China, the central government does not have a main role in poverty reduction programs. Rather, the different levels below the central government have more responsibilities in this regard. As for the central government’s role in poverty reduction, over a 29-year period, from 1980 to 2009, it allocated more than RMB 198 billion for fighting poverty (“China’s Progress Toward the MDGs,” 2010: 11), which is, considering it was a 29-year period, a very small amount to tackle poverty—approximately US$ 32 billion. Thus, we do not see a massive effort made by the central government on poverty reduction programs.
402 2006: 54.
403 2006: 54.
Europe. Over the past several decades in China, in particular since the 1980s, Chinese intellectuals have largely abandoned pressuring the Chinese government with a reformist model such as a Solidarity movement. Chinese intellectuals tend to work with the government instead of pressuring it from outside. By working with the government, they still advocate their views but are not threatening to the CCP’s rule. In short, Chinese intellectuals are currently not in an antagonistic relationship with the government. If Chinese intellectuals or dissidents choose to operate in an antagonistic manner, they will be detained, as recent examples demonstrate.

Janoski argues that while political rights with the central government and provincial governments in China have not achieved significant progress, progress has been achieved at some local levels in China, which he attributes to the progress of village elections. According to Janoski, China’s evolving political situation is not sufficient for the many in China who want more: “In the end, developments toward democracy are not satisfying for the many citizens who want more democracy.” Going even further than Janoski, Naughton argues that “the democratizing process itself is nowhere in evidence [in China], nor is Beijing becoming more democratic.” According to Kinzelbach, “Not only formal arrests and convictions, also residential surveillance is used by China’s state security organs

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404 2006: 54.
408 2014: 376.
410 2008: 155.
to silence critics, intimidate sympathizers and decapitate nascent movements that organize in the name of human rights."\textsuperscript{411}

Noakes states that the role played by PRC political scientists is problematic in terms of advancing democratization in the country. According to Noakes, “many of China’s political scientists throughout the reform era have served state interests above those of genuine democratization, and today play an active role in reinforcing CCP rule.”\textsuperscript{412} Noakes went on to state that regarding political scientists in China, “the discipline actively supports the current regime instead of undermining it.”\textsuperscript{413} But Noakes offers words of caution regarding the potential for change among political scientists in China: “there is no guarantee that just because political scientists in China are not pushing for democratization at present means they could not or would not do so in the future.”\textsuperscript{414}

In China, journalists are mandated by the CCP to have a press card that the CCP issues. The CCP decides if such press cards will be renewed and has the authority to cancel the card at any time.\textsuperscript{415} Thus, this is significant for self-censorship, as the journalist knows what the consequences may be if he reports on topics that the CCP does not want him to. The CCP allows for journalists to expose wrongdoing in certain circumstances in China if such exposure will allow the Chinese government to correct that inappropriate governance and advance good

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{411} 2013: 171. \\
\textsuperscript{412} 2014: 246. \\
\textsuperscript{413} 2014: 258. \\
\textsuperscript{414} 2014: 259. \\
\textsuperscript{415} Lorentzen, 2014: 410.
\end{flushright}
Having said that, the government does not want unlimited reporting on such news. At a certain point, the government then decides enough reporting on that particular topic and ends or limits the reporting. Related to this topic, Tamara Shie states: “Although there has been a general loosening of controls over speech, press, assembly, and association, and the Internet has to an extent furthered those freedoms, it has at the same time allowed the Chinese government to limit such freedoms where they continue to threaten central party power.”

In 2014, Bill Callahan conducted an interview with Ai Weiwei, a leading PRC critic of the Chinese government. Callahan, who regards Ai as having the best intentions for his country, states that Ai’s strategy of taking on the CCP advances civil society in China. According to Callahan, “[Ai Weiwei] feels that the PRC is a corrupt authoritarian state, and the country can only be saved if the government respects freedom of expression and the rule of law.” Callahan argues that Ai represents “citizen intellectuals” in China. The term “citizen intellectual” in the PRC, Callahan argues, “accounts for the slippery nature of Chinese politics, where activists often have a complex relation to the state: sometimes they work with the state, and at other times against it—but always for what they see as the good of China, rather than just for the good of the party-state.” Such citizen intellectuals, therefore, are not simply puppets of the Chinese government. Instead, they are...
striving to advance political openness in China. In Callahan’s view, “citizen intellectuals are creating a new form of political space in post-socialist China.”

Regarding state-society relations in post-Mao China, PRC scholars Kang Xiaoguang and Han Heng (Kang teaches at Renmin University and Han at Zhengzhou University) state that the Chinese government operates in a very strategic way. In their words, the Chinese government “controls society purposefully, flexibly, and selectively.” They went on to add that the threat level the CCP faces is the essential factor in the Chinese government’s decision on how to regulate state-society relations: “Its controls are very intensive and strong when it feels such are necessary, and lax or even absent when control is considered unnecessary.”

According to Lianjiang Li, a PRC citizen who teaches at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Chinese citizens have increasingly been demanding and pressuring the government for improvement in rights, but these same people have been willing to work within the system for this redress. In short, PRC citizens who aim to advance their rights have not been calling for fundamental change. Having said that, Li speculates that if these Chinese who are not satisfied or do not achieve their desired outcomes, then Chinese citizens “may become more distrustful about the legitimacy of existing laws and regulations, as well as about central rule-making authorities, and may thereby develop stronger rights consciousness.”

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423 2014: 901.
424 2008: 49.
425 2008: 49.
Renee Xia and Perry Link focus on the case of Cao Shunli to demonstrate how the Chinese government is very concerned about the potential international impact and international involvement regarding human rights in China. The Chinese government was very aggressive with Cao in 2009 when she received a one-year sentence in a forced labor camp for her role in organizing a public protest in Beijing to name and shame the government for lying to the UN about human rights in China. Shortly after being released in 2010, she was again sent to a forced labor camp. But the issue that really pushed the Chinese government to its limit was when Cao wanted to travel to Geneva to speak at UNHRC and call out the Chinese government at the international human rights regime. This was unacceptable to the CCP, as it was viewed as significantly more threatening to the CCP than her actions with domestic protests. Cao died shortly after being released due to health issues and neglect during captivity.428

Xia and Link point out that the Chinese government has evolved on its position and rhetoric on human rights. They state that after Tiananmen, the Chinese government’s position was that human rights are not part of Chinese history and dismissed the concept. But as time went on, Xia and Link point out, the Chinese government changed its stance on this. At the time of their article in 2014, Xia and Link state: “In recent years, though, there has been a clear change of strategy, especially in dealings with the UN.”429 They went on to add: “Now the government’s pitch is that China champions human rights and is even a standard-bearer for them, while China’s state media instead takes every opportunity to discuss alleged rights

428 Xia and Link, 2014.
429 Xia and Link, 2014.
violations by the US and other Western countries." Xia and Link went on to state that regarding how the Chinese government boasts about itself as the champion of human rights, there may be blowback for doing so: “But there is an obvious danger for the government in this strategy: the Great Secret of what actually happens inside China must be kept sealed inside.” Thus, the Chinese government does not want people like Cao Shunli and other activists telling the world or the UN about China’s poor human rights practice.

In this section, numerous scholars have argued that the Chinese government makes calculated decisions on what policies to implement. Thus, my argument is very similar. However, these scholars do not focus on China’s actions in the UNGA on voting behavior. Instead, they focus on domestic policies the Chinese government implements. Nonetheless, in terms of the calculations that the Chinese government ponders in order to advance its preferences before implementing policies or actions, there is much common ground between my argument and scholars in this section.

**PRC dissidents on the power of the Internet**

Numerous PRC activists have stated that the Internet is a positive development for Chinese citizens in advancing civil society and political openness in the country. Xiao Qiang, the Executive Director of Human Rights in China, states that the Internet and media reforms in China have resulted in a significant

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430 Xia and Link, 2014.
431 Xia and Link, 2014.
432 For example, Xiao Qiang, 2003; Teng Biao, 2013, 2014; Chen Guangcheng 2012; Liu Xiaobo 2006; and Ran Yunfei, 2012.
expansion and spreading of information in China and to the rest of the world about China. According to Xiao Qiang, “The rise of the Internet has provided PRC citizens with unprecedented opportunities to access a diverse range of information and perspectives.” Ran Yunfei also has positive comments about the impact of the Internet in China: “The good news is that blogging and the Internet have damaged the CCP’s monopoly on information.” He went on to add that due to this, “change is happening slowly, from the grassroots.” However, he acknowledges that it will be a long process to bring about change. As he points out: “the damage of years living under this system is profound.” Liu Xiaobo, the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize winner, points to the power of the Internet as a potential source for change: “thanks to the Internet, the possibilities for the [Chinese] people to obtain information and to express their needs keep growing, and their capacity to create spontaneous organizations is constantly increasing.” Chen Guangcheng had very positive comments on technology and the Internet’s impact on China: “The new technology has made news more free. It’s pushed China to a new level. It’s made it harder to cover things up.” In his 2013 article, Teng Biao had an optimistic take on the power of the Internet for Chinese activists. Teng views the Internet and social media as allowing information to spread in China: “The Internet has made communications between various intellectuals and activists extremely frequent and

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433 2003: 70.
434 2003: 70.
437 2006: 134.
438 Johnson, 2014: “‘Pressure for Change is at the Grassroots’: An Interview with Chen Guangcheng.”
convenient.”

Teng reiterated this view one year after, “The weiquan movement has also been helped greatly by the Internet because you can find other like-minded people.”

PRC dissidents on civil society

Numerous PRC dissidents and human rights activists have voiced their views during interviews with Ian Johnson of The New York Review of Books. Much of this section on how PRC dissidents view civil society as lacking in China draws from those interviews. Ran Yunfei, who Johnson regards as “One of China’s most outspoken public intellectuals,” states that when he was detained during the Jasmine Revolution in China, he was interrogated about his involvement with Chinese dissidents. According to Ran, the Chinese government has a tremendous fear regarding Chinese citizens mobilizing or linking up in a cause to go against the government. As Ran stated: “They're [the Chinese government] worried about networks.” Ran lauded NGOs in general and stated that China needs NGOs in order to advance. “NGOs are necessary in the same way that Churches are.”

When asked about the recent editorial in People’s Daily urging reform in China, Ran downplayed the potential impact of that article, as well as other newspapers in China calling for political change.

439 2013: 5.
440 Johnson, 2014: “China’s Unstoppable Lawyers: An Interview with Teng Biao.”
441 See Johnson’s interview, 2012: “Learning How to Argue: An Interview with Ran Yunfei.”
442 After the events in Tunisia that led to the Arab Spring, some activists in China called for Chinese protests in the streets in February and March 2011. Due to the heavy police and security presence in China to thwart such a Jasmine revolution, the protests were stifled.
Johnson regards Teng Biao as “one of China’s best-known civil-rights lawyers” and a leading weiquan lawyer in China. Teng teaches at China University of Political Science and Law. According to Teng Biao, the arrest of Uyghur professor Ilham Tohti in the fall of 2014 represents a much larger crackdown the government is implementing in China. Teng views this as part of Xi Jinping’s decision when Xi ascended to formal power in March 2013. Teng states that prior to March 2013 when Xi was the clear person in charge, the Chinese government was not nearly as aggressive with civil society as after Xi took power in March 2013. According to Teng: “now it seems that their [the central government] purpose is to destroy the ability of civil society to exist.” Teng Biao is very concerned about the true intentions of Xi Jinping: “He is not able to achieve totalitarianism, but he wants to.”

Huang Qi, a PRC citizen and activist, founded a website about human rights, making it the first of its kind in China. The website (liusi tianwang or June 4 heavenly web, which he started in 1999) details human rights in China, such as land being seized by the government and also focuses on protests in China. Huang Qi stated that when he was indicted in 2000, the reason he was provided with by the government was that he was responsible for the country’s first and only website on human rights. Huang stated in this interview with Johnson in 2013 that the way human rights are perceived and talked about in China was different from 2000,

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446 Johnson, 2014: “China’s Unstoppable Lawyers: An Interview with Teng Biao.”
447 Johnson, 2014: “China’s Unstoppable Lawyers: An Interview with Teng Biao.”
448 Johnson, 2014: “China’s Unstoppable Lawyers: An Interview with Teng Biao.”
449 Johnson, 2013: “Blogging the Slow-Motion Revolution: An Interview with China’s Huang Qi.”
450 Johnson, 2013: “Blogging the Slow-Motion Revolution: An Interview with China’s Huang Qi.”
pointing to actions the Chinese government has committed itself to on paper at least. According to Huang: “now human rights is at least officially enshrined in the constitution.” In 2004, the phrase “human rights” was inserted as an amendment to the PRC Constitution. Thus, Huang is making reference to what the Chinese government has officially committed itself to on paper at least.451 He went on to add: “the government talks all the time about human rights so the discourse has changed.” According to Huang, the Chinese government’s own words on human rights are significant: “It is significant because now they can’t arrest you for doing what we did in the late 1990s.” In contrast to the scathing criticism of Xi that his fellow dissident Teng Biao provided, Huang had positive comments on Xi Jinping regarding allowing for engagement on human rights issues.452

Johnson also interviewed Chen Guangcheng, a blind PRC lawyer who exposed improper government acts (such as sterilizations and abortions) in Linyi, Shandong.453 On April 22, 2012, Chen was under house arrest for 19 months before he escaped and eventually reached the US Embassy and then the US. Regarding China, Chen stated: “the society is developing and the spread of information is gradually becoming transparent.” According to Chen, it has been common people in China who have been the ones advancing progress regarding politics and political reform—not government officials. According to Chen, “when there’s been an improvement [in China regarding political reform], it’s not because of improving the

451 An article in The Economist also states that many Chinese rights activists cite the 2004 amendment on human rights in making their case for better treatment (see “China with legal characteristics,” Nov 1, 2014)
452 See Johnson, 2013: “Blogging the Slow-Motion Revolution: An Interview with China’s Huang Qi.”
453 See Kinzelbach, 2013: 165.
quality of officials; it’s because ordinary people grasp the law and push.” Thus, Chen and other activists mention how non-state actors in China have been using the law to hold the government accountable and advance political reform by using language that the government has committed itself to. Chen points to various examples (such as the case of Sun Zhigang, who was detained and died while in custody for not having the proper *hukou* or residence permit, and student deaths during the 2008 earthquake) to illustrate his argument that common people have been the ones in China who have brought about change. Thus, he argues: “the decisive pressure for change [in China] is at the grassroots level.” Chen stated that there are so many human rights abuse cases in China that international actors do not know about. In Chen’s view, it is the pervasive human rights abuses in China that has the Chinese government concerned. According to Chen, the Chinese government does not want this information about the real extent of human rights abuses being revealed to the world. According to Chen, the CCP is very concerned about collective action and protests regarding human rights abuses.

Johnson conducted interviews with the married couple Tsering Woeser (commonly referred to as Woeser) and her husband, Wang Lixiong. Woeser, a Tibetan, stated that the Chinese government has prevented her from traveling back to Tibet in recent years from flying out of Beijing and she was denied entering the capital of Tibet while driving in Tibet.\footnote{Johnson, 2014: “Beyond the Dalai Lama: An Interview with Woeser and Wang Lixiong.”} Johnson regards Wang Lixiong and Woeser as “two of China’s best-known thinkers on the government’s policy toward ethnic
minorities.”

When asked by Johnson to assess Xi Jinping’s policies and actions regarding Tibet, Wang stated that under Xi Jinping the Chinese government has been even more aggressive with its actions in Tibet. Regarding the Chinese government’s policy in Tibet, Wang stated: “In their hearts they know their policy is the problem. But they aren’t willing to explore other paths, such as autonomy, because it would be too unpredictable—it could lead to them losing control.”

In 2011, Wei Jingsheng expressed his views on Chinese politics with Rebecca Chao of The Journal of International Affairs in an interview. Wei was an electrician at the Beijing Zoo in 1978 when he placed his essay, “The Fifth Modernization,” on Xidan Street. That location on Xidan Street soon thereafter received other statements by Chinese and was called “Democracy Wall.” Wei soon thereafter received a stiff prison sentence of 14 years and was freed in 1993, but he was then back in prison in 1994. At the time of the interview in 2011, Wei was critical of China’s political system, stating that he disagrees with those in the West, specifically in academia, government, and the media who view China as “more free and more open.” In Wei’s view, “I believe that China’s tremendous economic growth has severely weakened the West’s ability to put pressure on China.” In his view, there is a tremendous lack of individual freedom in China: “if there is no freedom to organize politically, then there is no individual freedom.” Wei stated that he differs with Liu Xiaobo’s views of the CCP, specifically he differs with Liu’s:

455 Johnson, 2014: “Beyond the Dalai Lama: An Interview with Woeser and Wang Lixiong.”
460 2011: 193.
“peaceful, deliberative nonviolent approach toward the communist government.”

Wei stated that force may be needed to fight against the CCP in self-defense.

Liu Xiaobo, one of the PRC’s most high profile dissidents and winner of the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize, wrote an essay in 2006 that was published in English in 2011 in which he offered a scathing criticism of the Chinese government’s 2005 White Paper, “Building of Democratic Politics in China.” In his essay, Liu states: “Like the white paper on human rights released by the CCP authorities, this white paper on democracy is full of lies.” Liu argues that the white paper’s assertion that power in the PRC is with the Chinese people is an example of how it is a farce.

Liu does, however, state that progress has been made in China in the post-Mao years: “There is absolutely no doubt that on the post-Mao mainland, compared with the Mao era, our countrymen have gained tangible benefits in terms of food and shelter and an extremely limited space for personal choices.” Continuing in the direction of praise for the evolution of China’s political system in recent decades, Liu added that slowly progress is being made in China in a number of areas, such as “freedom of movement, mobility, and career choice.”

In Liu's view, Chinese are becoming aware of their rights, and this development has much potential. Liu advocates for non-state actors in China to seize the opportunity when the moment is right in China to move forward with

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465 2006: 156.
466 2006: 162.
467 2006: 162.
political reform: “when the government’s attitude loosens, one must take advantage of it to expand civic resources and space.” According to Liu, “In today's China where the people are more and more aware of their rights, a political regime that has not been chosen by the people is increasingly losing its legitimacy.” Liu argues that the discontent in China is due to, “the richness of the officials’ rights, and the paucity of the people’s rights.” Liu concedes that due to the CCP’s dominance in the country, non-state actors have little opportunity to organize a campaign for political change.

Nonetheless, Liu is not completely pessimistic about the situation in China, as even modest reforms allow for openings. “Under the authoritarian rule of the Chinese Communist Party,” Liu argues, “it is difficult for a countrywide organized resistance movement to emerge, but at the end of the day, the partial reform permits the growth of grey areas and of half freedoms that result in the constant development of the civil rights movement.” Liu argues that there is outrage by common Chinese with government officials at all levels who think they are above the law. It is due to this outrage that any incident in which there is government abuse can serve as a catalyst for common people taking to the streets to demand action or a change. Liu argues that it is not primarily economic factors that are responsible for the current discontent in China. Rather, “it is the result of the
political inequality between the rights of the people and the rights of the officials.”

Thus, it is not primarily the high Gini coefficient that explains the discontent at the local levels in China. Instead, he argues that it is “people’s growing awareness of their rights and economic interests, and in the diversification of ideas and values.”

*Socialization/Eastern Europe’s legacy*

In making their case that the Chinese government should improve human rights in China, some Chinese activists have referred to international human rights instruments. By doing so, these PRC activists and dissidents essentially aim to call out of their government for not abiding by international human rights instruments that the Chinese government has either signed or that exist. In short, these activists hope to, as stated in the constructivist literature on activists calling out their government, rhetorically entrap their government.

Ding Zilin, for example, who taught philosophy at Renmin University and whose son was killed during Tiananmen, spearheaded a movement, the Tiananmen Mothers, to obtain information from the Chinese government regarding what happened at the Tiananmen massacre. Then, in 1998, as China was prepared to be part of UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UNCCPR), she and others from the Tiananmen Mothers aimed to raise awareness in China about corruption and how the government did not allow rights for its people. Thus, the aim here for the

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473 2006: 121.
474 2006: 121.
476 Beja and Goldman, 2009: 26. Such a movement is similar to the one started in Argentina by mothers of the disappeared who wanted answers about their son’s disappearance.
Tiananmen Mothers was not about Tiananmen, but rather, the goal was for such consciousness raising to result in Chinese people seeking to have their rights respected. Also in 1998, the Tiananmen Mothers wanted the Chinese government to abide by UDHR.477 Thus, the Tiananmen Mothers have invoked international human rights mechanisms to call out the Chinese government in the hope of political change. Along similar lines of using the government’s words to hold the government accountable, Teng Biao states that with the Chinese government promoting rule of law in the 1990s, this had an impact on Chinese activists: “People began to realize that we can use this vocabulary to fight for civil rights.”478

This topic of Chinese activists invoking the Chinese government’s own statements or policies has received some attention in the literature. For example, Kevin O’Brien states that he and Lianjiang Li observed Chinese villagers citing and using “the policies, laws and commitments of the state to combat local officials who were ignoring those policies, laws and commitments.”479 In emphasizing the benefits of village elections, O’Brien and Li stated that as a result of modern communications, Chinese villagers are more aware of government policies and want to be treated justly.480 Thus, information enables Chinese villagers to be aware of the government’s stated policies. O’Brien and Li emphasize in their book that villagers are critical of local government officials for not following the central government’s policies that villagers claim they are entitled to.

478 Johnson, 2014: “China’s Unstoppable Lawyers: An Interview with Teng Biao.”
479 2013: 1051.
480 O’Brien and Li, 2006.
The Chinese government has taken into account the political reforms of other countries when deciding what political reforms to implement. In addition, the Chinese government has examined what led to the downfall of other governments and how governments have continued.481 This studying of other countries has been done to figure out how events may evolve for the CCP.482 The events that took place in the fall of 1989 in Eastern Europe put tremendous fear in the CCP, as the Communist government there fell to people taking it to the streets. The collapse of the Soviet Union was a significant factor for the Chinese government not moving ahead with further democratization in China.483 As Bill Callahan points out, “the CCP’s intense study of the reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Union shows that even party elites understand China’s current problems in this historical and social context.”484

In short, given that the Chinese government has taken into account what has led to the downfall of other states, it supports the central argument that I advance in this dissertation: the Chinese government acts based upon perceived threats to CCP rule and is very concerned about anything that may potentially result in the downfall of the CCP. The Chinese government implemented village elections to prevent dissatisfaction with the government—not to serve as the catalyst for democratization at all levels in China—and is the next topic that I examine. In short, village elections were implemented with the goal of keeping the CCP in power,

481 Shambaugh, 2008: 283.
482 Shambaugh, 2008: 296.
484 2014: 9 15.
which aligns well with my argument that the Chinese government acts to advance its preferences.

Village elections

This section on village elections allows one to assess how the Chinese government views voting and how voting may be beneficial for the CCP. The Chinese government views village elections, and thus voting in those elections, as a strategic weapon to advance itself, which furthers my argument of using rational choice to explain China’s actions on human rights. Thus, the CCP is indeed strategic about voting—both in the UNGA and with village elections—and wants such voting to advance its interests. The Chinese government does not, in contrast to the US and other states in the West, view elections as a human rights issue.

Since China is not a democracy and does not have free elections, village elections serve as the only opportunity for people in China to engage in voting for government officials. This topic has received ample scholarship among China scholars. Elections at the local level in China have been carried out not in the developed urban areas of China, but in the underdeveloped rural areas. At the national level, the CCP does not want the village elections moving up to the national level; instead, the goal with village elections is to prevent unrest at the local level and to hold local leaders accountable. The topic of village elections in China is complex, and it is for this reason that scholars are divided regarding such elections and the outcomes of those elections. In short, there is not a consensus among China

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485 Kennedy, 2010: 172.
scholars on the benefits of village elections, as some scholars argue that such elections are largely insignificant\textsuperscript{486} and others, due to the complexities of the processes surrounding the elections, provide both positive and negative views on the elections.\textsuperscript{487}

The Ministry of Civil Affairs (MoCA) wrote the Organic Law in 1987, which was then revised in 1998.\textsuperscript{488} The 1987 version was implemented by the central government to improve village governance.\textsuperscript{489} The revised 1998 Organic Law provides the opportunity for villagers to recall elected government officials, as well as nominate people for village office.\textsuperscript{490} Also under the 1998 Organic Law, local leaders are to make available to the public all issues related to collecting and spending money.\textsuperscript{491}

The status of village elections and improved governance in rural China differs from place to place, as some villages have clean elections and open political systems and others do not.\textsuperscript{492} While there is no accountability of government officials at the national level, the national government has made it possible to hold local leaders accountable at the village level. The idea of village elections in China emerged as an idea to lessen corruption and gain legitimacy for the CCP.\textsuperscript{493} Even though the village

\textsuperscript{486} Pei, 2007: 57; Tan, 2009; 2010; Tsai, 2007; Perry and Goldman, 2007.
\textsuperscript{487} Manion, 2009; Zweig and Chung, 2007; O’Brien and Li, 2006; O’Brien and Han, 2009.
\textsuperscript{488} Li, 2007: 102.
\textsuperscript{489} Tsai, 2007: 120.
\textsuperscript{490} Kennedy, 2010: 174-175.
\textsuperscript{491} Kennedy, 2010: 175. Kennedy points out that there is not a consensus among scholars on the benefits of the Organic Law, for some villages have complied with the Organic Law and others have not (2010: 175).
\textsuperscript{492} Kennedy, 2010: 169.
\textsuperscript{493} Levy, 2007: 33.
elections were intended to reduce corruption and improve governance at the village level, corruption in buying votes is a serious problem.494

Numerous scholars have argued that the village elections in China have significantly improved political consciousness, fairness, and accountability. In short, some scholars argue that the elections have provided a dramatic change in allowing for an improvement in the political situation overall in Chinese villages. In emphasizing the positive changes that have occurred as a result of the village elections in China, consciousness about political rights have increased in villages.495 Progress is being made over time regarding the elections, as voters in such villages view the elections as improving in fairness and competitiveness.496 In building on this, O’Brien and Han argue that such village elections have the power to influence elected leaders to adhere to constituent demands.497 Thus, Manion argues the village elections are “a truly important pocket of institutional change,” regarding the impact of village elections on local politics.498

Main criticisms of village elections are that the elections have not improved governance in rural China499 and that such elections lack the potential for powerful results in governance, because the CCP has both tremendous power on who is nominated and the outcomes of the village elections for the majority of village elections.500 Another main flaw of the situation at the village level is that non-
elected government officials above the village level have significant power over the
elected village leaders regarding financial issues and responsibilities. The MoCA,
which oversees the rural elections, has not followed through with complaints from
villagers regarding voting irregularities, as the MoCA is cautious about not offending
local officials. Instead of looking into it, the MoCA tends to contact local level
government officials to handle the inquiries. Regarding flaws in campaigning at
the village level, the only time numerous candidates are allocated for campaigning is
simply giving a quick, superficial speech on election day. Having the speech the
day of the election does not provide voters with adequate time to think about the
candidates. There are many problems with such local elections, bribery, and voting
for candidates. Based on the quantitative and qualitative studies that she carried
out in rural China, Lily Tsai points out that even though there have been local
elections in China, it does not mean that local governments are improving public
services. Thus, for Tsai, strong social groups are more significant than elections
for good governance in rural China. The way the CCP has handled village
elections is very telling regarding the way it views voting. The CCP is very cautious
about voting, as the potential impact of such voting could indeed threaten the
existence of the CCP. This same pattern is manifested in the CCP’s voting in the

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502 Tan, 2009: 413.
505 Tsai, 2007, 117.
506 According to Tsai, it is not the elections, but the “village’s social institutions” that are essential in
delivering such public services (2007: 117). Tsai argues that these groups could be based on religion,
ethnicity, or civic groups (2007: 128). It is these groups, according to Tsai, that are effective in
promoting good governance in rural China (2007: 128). Tsai points out that even in Chinese villages
where there were fraudulent elections, the social groups are strong enough to have a positive impact
UNGA on human rights issues, as the CCP alters its voting based on perceived threat levels to its existence. This topic will receive ample attention in the main chapters on China's voting in the UN. Several years ago, some scholars viewed the *weiquan* movement as a positive breakthrough for advancing civil society in China. Recently, however, since these *weiquan* lawyers have come under attack, such optimism has been deflated.

*The predicament of Lawyers in China and weiquan lawyers*

Based on their study of lawyers in the capital of Hunan province, Changsha, PRC scholars Cai (Cai teaches at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology) and Yang (Yang teaches at Guangzhou University), found that lawyers were reluctant to take on cases involving administrative or criminal cases, as those cases go against the government. This is a significant impediment for the rule of law developing in China. As Cai and Yang state: “a severe problem in China is that defendants involved in criminal and administrative litigation are underrepresented.” According to the study by Cai and Yang, lawyers in China feel that it is a foregone conclusion that they will lose if they take on a case going against the government. If Chinese lawyers do take on a case going against the government, as we will see with weiquan lawyers, they are putting themselves at risk in terms of how the government may retaliate against them. Stern and O’Brien point out that the Chinese government has been applying pressure and

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507 2006: 166.
508 2006: 166.
targeting Chinese lawyers in recent years who have been engaged on issues such as justice and rights.\textsuperscript{511}

Weiquan lawyers, who can be defined as “rights-protection lawyers,” focus on diverse topics and thus are not a monolithic group. Reflecting this diversity among the weiquan lawyers, there are those who espouse a more moderate approach and those who are more radical.\textsuperscript{512} While a central aim of weiquan lawyers is to advance rule of law, there is a difference of opinion among them on the means to accomplish that.\textsuperscript{513} For example, radical weiquan lawyers are much more aggressive in their willingness to defy the political system in China.\textsuperscript{514} Such radical weiquan lawyers are sometimes targeted by the government, with being detained, prosecuted, or harassed. Weiquan lawyers have not been well received by the judicial system in China, for weiquan lawyers are viewed as going against the system in China.\textsuperscript{515} Due to the way weiquan lawyers are treated by the judicial branch and the government in China, other lawyers in China are cognizant of this and do not want to be targeted that way. Thus, such lawyers who are politically cautious do not take on cases that involve sensitive political issues.\textsuperscript{516}

Not all weiquan lawyers, however, are targeted by the Chinese government. It is common for weiquan lawyers espousing either a moderate position or being willing to work within the system to be well-received by the Chinese government,

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{511} 2012: 183. \\
\textsuperscript{512} Fu and Cullen, 2011: 41. \\
\textsuperscript{513} Fu and Cullen, 2011: 49. \\
\textsuperscript{514} Fu and Cullen, 2011: 41. \\
\textsuperscript{515} See Fu and Cullen, 2011: 47. \\
\textsuperscript{516} Fu and Cullen, 2011: 48.
\end{footnotesize}
often the central government, and receive positive attention in China.\footnote{Fu and Cullen, 2011: 50.} But then, due to the attention weiquan lawyers receive because of their cases in the courtroom, state and non-state actors from abroad and INGOs are also interested in such lawyers and fund weiquan lawyers to advance their cause.\footnote{Fu and Cullen, 2011: 50.} States, INGOs, and the international media have been the main advocates of weiquan lawyers.\footnote{Fu and Cullen, 2011: 55.} Given that states, INGOs, and the international media are the main supporters of weiquan lawyers, weiquan lawyers rely on such international support in raising awareness about the actions of weiquan lawyers and the persecution of weiquan lawyers by the government to further their cause. There may be a potential setback with having such support from abroad for this endeavor, as the Chinese government is very concerned about international involvement with such issues and views such INGOs as out to harm China.\footnote{See Fu and Cullen, 2011: 55.} Again, this reflects the ultimate objective of the CCP: To remain in power.

According to Teng Biao, international groups and lawyers should support weiquan lawyers. Teng Biao states that other lawyers organizations in China (i.e. non weiquan lawyers) are government-controlled and thus supporting them is not the way to go.\footnote{Johnson, 2014: “China’s Unstoppable Lawyers: An Interview with Teng Biao.”} Teng states that international groups and lawyers can train and have sessions with weiquan lawyers. According to Teng, “for us rights defense lawyers, our frequent strategy is to use the media, especially the Internet, to put

\footnote{Fu and Cullen, 2011: 50.}
pressure on the government.” Teng speaks optimistically about how the weiquan movement and lawyers focusing on human rights issues have developed in just over ten years. Despite the potential risks with taking on sensitive cases, Teng states that has not deterred such weiquan lawyers: “We [weiquan lawyers] find that when we take a sensitive case, more lawyers are interested in helping.” Therefore, we see that there are courageous PRC weiquan lawyers focused on advancing human rights issues in their country.

_Death penalty and the desire to win over public opinion_

Numerous scholars have examined the extent to which the Chinese government is concerned about public opinion. Noakes and Trevaskes, for example, focus on how the Chinese government has evolved on the death penalty because of domestic implications. Also related to public opinion, Gries argues that the Chinese government takes into account public opinion regarding Chinese international relations. Fewsmith and Naughton echo this view that Chinese public opinion is considered regarding Chinese government decision-making.

According to Noakes, the changes the Chinese government has implemented on the death penalty in China since 2005 are due to the Chinese government being pragmatic, as the Chinese government recognizes that in order to be effective and

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522 Johnson, 2014: “China’s Unstoppable Lawyers: An Interview with Teng Biao.”
523 Johnson, 2014: “China’s Unstoppable Lawyers: An Interview with Teng Biao.”
524 2014.
525 2008.
526 2005: 403.
527 2008.
528 2008.
remain in power, it needs to do this.\textsuperscript{529} Thus, he argues that the Chinese government’s decision on the death penalty (the government-stated objective of: “kill fewer, kill carefully”) is more about domestic politics and pragmatism. In other words, the Chinese government did not have an international audience in mind for this decision about the death penalty. Moreover, it was not primarily about the power of international norms on the death penalty.\textsuperscript{530} This case demonstrates how norm localization failed to materialize, as actors in China did not accommodate the international norm on this topic.

As of January 1, 2007, the Supreme People’s Court (SPC) has become the institution in China that decides on death penalty cases. Prior to that, for over two decades, the authority in deciding death penalty cases was with the provincial level courts.\textsuperscript{531} In late 2006, SPC Chief Justice Xiao Yang aimed to limit the use of the death penalty, as he attempted to advance the notion of _kuanyan xiangji_ or balancing leniency and severity. On October 31, 2006, the National People’s Congress (NPC) changed the NPC’s previous policy on this issue from September 2, 1983. The 1983 NPC ruling granted provincial courts responsibility regarding reviewing and approving capital punishment.\textsuperscript{532}

In also focusing on the significance of public opinion regarding CCP decision making, Gries argues that the Chinese public does have an impact on Chinese foreign

\textsuperscript{529} 2014: 18-19.
\textsuperscript{530} Noakes, 2014: 27.
\textsuperscript{531} Trevaskes, 2008: 394.
\textsuperscript{532} Trevaskes, 2008: 395. While the CCP has a significant influence on the NPC, Nathan argues that the NPC has demonstrated that it is not completely a rubber stamp. The NPC has demonstrated it is willing to vote against bills that are proposed by the CCP (Nathan, 1997: 233).
policy decision-making. On this topic of being adept at taking into account public opinion, Fewsmith argues that the CCP has the potential to remain in power for many years if it can respond effectively to what the populous wants and if the central government can oversee the other levels of government perform effectively. Naughton provides a very appropriate quote on this topic regarding the Chinese government’s desire to win over public opinion: “This trend is somewhat paradoxical: democratization as such is virtually non-existent, yet China’s political leaders are making every effort to identify and move with, even preempt, opinion among informed citizens.” In sum, this demonstrates how the CCP’s ultimate objective is to remain in power and implements policies that further its rule, which advances the rational choice argument. In keeping with this, the Chinese government is unwilling to initiate policies that may potentially threaten its rule.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the necessary historical context for my focus in this dissertation. Moreover, I have examined how scholars and PRC dissidents view human rights in China. Throughout the chapter, when focusing on each topic, I have related it to the main argument of this dissertation: using rational choice, I demonstrate how the Chinese government acts strategically to advance its preferences that are based upon perceived threats to CCP rule. I pointed out how China’s strong support for pariah states started to change in September 2005 when

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533 2005: 403.
534 Fewsmith, 2008: 224.
Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick used the phrase “responsible stakeholder” to describe Chinese international relations. This phrase and message by the US government was both well received by Beijing and calmed a previously nervous Beijing about the potential US agenda for democratization globally. This argument about China acting based on the perceived threat to CCP rule is very relevant for policy impactions. When the Chinese government does not perceive any potential threat to CCP rule, we should expect more international cooperation by China. Conversely, when it perceives such as threatening, we should expect much resistance.

In this chapter, I aligned myself more with scholars who focus on the lack of civil society and democratization in China than with the camp of scholars who are optimistic on civil society in China. Some of these scholars who focus on the lack of civil society in China also argue that the Chinese government makes calculated decisions on policies according to the threat level to CCP rule. In other words, these scholars argue, as I have argued in this dissertation, that the Chinese government implements policies in order to remain in power. Moreover, I observed how Xi has sought to curtail any advancement of civil society, especially weiquan lawyers.

In setting the stage for the following chapters, I have made the case in this chapter that voting in the UNGA is significant, as the case of the MDGs illustrates. The following chapters focus on China’s voting and statements in the UNGA on the topic of human rights. Those chapters reveal the pattern of China’s voting behavior and statements based upon the perceived threat to CCP rule.
Chapter five: China’s voting behavior on non-country specific human rights resolutions in the UNGA

Abstract

It is generally agreed that China has a poor domestic human rights practice. However, when examining the percentage of UNGA resolutions that contain a human rights component, China has consistently voted in the affirmative on such
UNGA resolutions. From 1971, which was the year China joined the UN, until 2012, China voted in the affirmative for the vast majority of human rights resolutions in the UNGA. This is in sharp contrast to China’s domestic human rights record according to many datasets that measure human rights practice. When I examine the resolutions, it is clear why China has such a voting record: China has consistently voted with the governments of developing countries in the UNGA. In other words, if a human rights resolution is either favorable for the government of a developing country or if the resolution criticizes a developed country because of its actions in a developing country, China votes in the affirmative on such resolutions.

This chapter advances the central argument of the dissertation: the Chinese government is very concerned about potential threats to its rule and acts according to the way it perceives such threats. This pattern is observed by China’s voting behavior and how it modifies its voting in the UNGA according to the perceived domestic threat level to the CCP.

Introduction

The main puzzle is that China has a very bad domestic human rights record and yet votes in the affirmative on the vast majority of UNGA human rights resolutions. Aggregated annual data (or data that is combined from the different categories used in this data set: (1) a general category of human rights; (2) freedom of religion; (3) women’s rights; (4) freedom of self-determination; (5) physical integrity rights; and (6) freedom of travel) demonstrates that China voted in the

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536 As stated previously, since the data set that I use for UNGA voting ends in 2012, I do not have any data beyond that year.
affirmative on the vast majority of human rights resolutions in the UNGA. However, using rational choice, I argue that China has done so not to be a champion of human rights in the UNGA, but rather to advance its own interests and to prevent any potential threat to CCP rule. My argument fits neatly with the rational choice argument that actors act in a manner to advance their preferences.

Since joining the UN in 1971, China has voted in the affirmative on human rights resolutions 79 percent of the time. This is in sharp contrast to China’s domestic human rights record. According to the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) human rights dataset, China was in the bottom 18 percent regarding domestic human rights practice. Regarding the favor ratio on voting on human rights, China voted in the affirmative on every human rights resolution for numerous years, and in many other years had a score that was close to 100 percent on human rights votes. For example, from 1971 to 1991, China never dropped below 60 percent in voting. In the 1990s, however, the score dropped. In the 1990s, due to the increased votes focusing on human rights resolutions that targeted the governments of developing countries, China did not vote in favor of such human rights resolutions targeting those countries because it did not want to be targeted in return by such countries, and thus the overall scoring of China on UNGA votes decreased. In short, China did not vote in the affirmative on such country-specific human rights resolutions because of the potential threat to CCP rule if China were to condemn the NAM countries with such votes. It is important to point out that my focus here is on

537 [http://www.humanrightsdata.com](http://www.humanrightsdata.com)
538 The voting ratio is obtained by dividing the number of times that China voted in the affirmative of human rights resolutions by the total number of such resolutions. For example, if there are 15 resolutions on a given human rights topic (say, physical integrity rights), and China voted in the affirmative on 5 of the 15 resolutions, then China’s voting in the affirmative is 33 percent.
China's voting behavior on UNGA resolutions that contain human rights components and not on supporting human rights in general.

*China's Voting Behavior on Human Rights Resolutions in the UNGA*

In this chapter, using rational choice’s emphasis that actors act to advance their preferences, I demonstrate that China’s voting on human rights resolutions in the UNGA reveals how the Chinese government is concerned about perceived threats to its rule. Based on the UNGA roll call data from 1946 to 2012 complied by Erik Voeten,539 this chapter identified the subset of UNGA resolutions on human rights since 1971.540 Since the goal is to make UNGA data comparable with the CIRI dataset, I selected the UNGA human rights resolutions that can find counterparts in the CIRI data. In total, I selected 704 such UNGA resolutions from 1971 to 2012. I read all 704 UNGA resolutions. For 48 resolutions, China was coded as “absent.” Therefore, the total number of resolutions for China was 656 instead of 704. Based on my reading of every individual UNGA resolution in this study, I found that for almost all of the UNGA human rights resolutions examined in this study, a “yes” vote was to vote in the affirmative on such human rights resolutions. Among the few resolutions that have received some controversy, specifically the UNGA votes on religion, such votes have been criticized as limiting free speech in order to protect religion. Therefore, such votes may be perceived as limiting human rights.

539 http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/Voeten/faces/study/StudyPage.xhtml?studyId=38311&stud yListingIndex=0_dee53f12c760141b21c251525332
540 This is because the People’s Republic of China became a UN member in 1971.
I divided these UNGA resolutions into six categories: 1) a broad category addressing human rights in general;\footnote{This category of human rights resolutions contained the key word “human rights” or “right to” in the title of a resolution.} 2) physical integrity rights; 3) freedom of travel; 4) electoral self determination; 5) freedom of religion; and 6) women’s rights. These categories comprised the vast majority of the categories shown in the CIRI data.\footnote{Among the commonly used categories of the CIRI data, only freedom of assembly and association, freedom of speech, and workers’ rights were missing from the UNGA data. However, these three categories were possibly being addressed by the general category of human rights.} As mentioned previously, China’s domestic human rights practice, as measured by the CIRI data, is among the lowest scores in the world. Except for disappearance and women’s political rights, China received almost the worst possible scores in all of the categories in the CIRI dataset from 1981 to 2011. Based on the same categories, however, the UNGA data presented a strikingly different picture. But, once again, it is because of the content of such resolutions that accounts for the significant discrepancy regarding China’s voting and its domestic practice. At the end of the chapter, I provide the list of resolutions examined in this chapter, showing the title and the year of each resolution.\footnote{By providing a list of categories on such UNGA resolutions, I am following the precedent established by Erik Voeten. Voeten also created a category that he labeled “human rights” resolutions in the UNGA (see Voeten, 2004).}

It is important to point out that I included resolutions on Israel and Palestine if there were clear human rights components with these resolutions. However, numerous scholars have proposed to exclude resolutions on Israel when assessing human rights issues in the UN.\footnote{E.g., Gowan and Brantner, 2010; Boockmann and Dreher, 2011} The main argument is that these resolutions tend to be highly politicized. For example, Gowan and Brantner argue that, “These votes—which pitch the US and Israel against nearly all other states, including the
EU—have a ritualistic air.⁵⁴⁵ Throughout the 1971 to 2012 time period, China always voted in the affirmative on human rights resolutions regarding Palestinians and criticized Israel for human rights abuses, which reflects China’s alignment with non-aligned movement (NAM) countries.

Of the six identified categories that I examined here, the category on human rights in general consisted of 418 resolutions, making it the largest number of resolutions for all of the categories. One example from this category was: "human rights situation in Kosovo." Regarding the topic of Kosovo and the Balkans region, China abstained on the 2012 resolution 67/243, “Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991.”⁵⁴⁶ That resolution (67/243) focused on the financing of the tribunal. While the resolution did not contain any language that condemned the crimes committed,⁵⁴⁷ as it just focused on the financing of the tribunal, it is clear that China does not want to vote for such international tribunals because of the potential for such tribunals also targeting China regarding Xinjiang, Tibetans, and other human rights violations.

Also focusing on China’s abstaining pattern or not voting in the affirmative for resolutions in the category of human rights in general, China abstained on UNGA resolution 28/3142 in 1973 because that resolution praised international human

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rights instruments such as ICCPR and ICESC. At that point, China had not signed either treaty, and thus China decided to abstain. If China voted in favor of resolution 28/3142, it would have placed itself in a rather precarious position of not having signed or ratified either treaty at that point. Thus, there was a perceived threat to CCP rule if China voted in favor of resolution 28/3142. For the resolutions in this particular category, if the resolutions condemned a developing country because of its human rights practice or if such resolutions aimed to advance human rights issues that China views as threatening (as the resolutions stated above), then China did not vote in the affirmative. Overall, however, China voted in the affirmative on the majority of the human rights resolutions in this category. When speaking at the UN’s Third Committee of General Assembly on October 26, 2000, the Chinese delegate stated the following on an issue that reinforces the CCP’s domestic agenda: “Today, when globalization is developing at a rapid speed, it is a matter of great urgency and relevance to realize economic, social and cultural rights.” The delegate then went on to lash out at the inequality that exists in IPE and staunchly support developing countries: “due to the existing unjust ad unreasonable international political and economic order, developing countries have been marginalized in this process than have benefited from it.”

In Ms. Xu Jing’s statement on October 21, 2009, she stated that the Chinese government takes the MDGs seriously. She went on to state that there is,
unfortunately in her view, a distinction in the world between 1) civil and political rights, and 2) economic, social, and cultural rights. She stated that the Chinese government would like to see UNHRC and advance economic, social, and cultural rights.552 Thus, if UNHRC were to do this, it would pose less of a threat to China, as the US and the West largely focus on civil and political rights instead of economic, cultural and social rights. If there were to be an emphasis on the latter or if both categories were viewed on the same level, then that would remove the potential threat that the Chinese government is concerned about with being targeted regarding civil and political rights. Due to the massive number of resolutions targeting Israel and other human rights topics in which the Chinese government is comfortable with, China voted in the affirmative on 294 such resolutions, bringing China’s ratio (dividing 294 by 418) of voting in the affirmative to .703 or 70 percent.

Another category that demonstrated a similar level of voting in the affirmative was women’s rights, which included 18 UNGA resolutions. One example read: “convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.”553 This category corresponded to women’s political, economic, and social rights in the CIRI data. Regarding this category of women’s rights, China voted in the affirmative for 83 percent of the votes. Regarding a 1972 resolution (27/3009), it stated that it urges states to take into account nominating women to UN positions.554 Since this is clearly not threatening to CCP rule, China voted in favor of it. Regarding one vote on women, 34/158 in 1979, it was a progressive resolution in

552 http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rgwt/t621894.htm
which it recognized the importance of women in contributing to advancing each country. It also made reference to the conference held by the NAM “on the role of Women in Development” that was in Baghdad in 1979. Given that there was reference to the NAM, it is not surprising that China supported it. Other resolutions from this category also advanced women’s rights by containing language that stated men and women are equals. However, China voted no on a 1975 women’s rights resolution (3519). For that resolution, there was language on disarmament, as the resolution advocated that governments, “take effective measures towards bringing about general and complete disarmament and convening the World Disarmament Conference as soon as possible.” Since this is the only language that distinguishes resolution 3519 from other resolutions that also advanced women’s rights, it is clear that such language on disarmament was essential for China voting no on the resolution. Voting in the affirmative on such a resolution would certainly not advance China’s military interests and thus could pose a threat to CCP military security.

The category of electoral self-determination had 191 resolutions, and an example was, “implementation of the declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples.” Since many of the resolutions in this particular category aimed to end colonial rule of developing countries and denounced developed countries, China voted in the affirmative on self-determination resolutions for 178 such resolutions or 93 percent of the votes.

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UNGA resolution 3297 ("Question of Southern Rhodesia") in 1974 offers a blistering criticism on the government on the "illegal racist minority regime" in Southern Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.\(^{558}\) China voted in the affirmative on this resolution. The document states, "Strongly deploring the increasing collaboration which certain States, particularly South Africa, in violation of Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations and of the relevant decisions of the United Nations, maintain with the illegal racist minority regime..."\(^{559}\) By voting in the affirmative, China endorsed the use of sanctions against the government, as the resolution states that the sanctions must be “comprehensive, mandatory and effectively supervised, enforced and complied with by all States, in particular by South Africa.”\(^{560}\) By voting in the affirmative, China clearly stated that it is not opposed to country-specific resolutions, as this resolution explicitly denounced the government of South Africa for working with “the illegal racist minority regime” in Southern Rhodesia. While I would argue that the government of South Africa should have been called out, it is not a consistent position by China, as that does interfere with a country’s sovereignty. Another self-determination resolution that China supported was 3113 ("Question of Territories under Portuguese administration").\(^{561}\) This resolution also strongly condemned a Western government (Portugal) for its actions in Africa, such as Mozambique and Angola. But there were a number of self-determination resolutions that clearly put China on the defensive and thus China did not vote in the


affirmative. Resolution 54/173 in 2000, which focused on the UN’s role in “enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization”\textsuperscript{562} is a clear example. Since the PRC only has elections at the village level, it is obvious that it did not vote in favor of this resolution, as that would pose a clear threat to China by advocating for not only elections countrywide, but also for legitimate elections countrywide. Also, as I pointed out in the literature review, there are many problems with village elections in China. Thus, this would perhaps allow the opportunity for PRC citizens to use China’s approval of this resolution to hold the government accountable. For resolution 55/96, “Promoting and consolidating democracy,”\textsuperscript{563} the language was also similar with 54/173, and China also abstained on 55/96. The language contained in resolution 56/159 in 2002,\textsuperscript{564} which has the same exact title as 54/173, which China also abstained on, is very similar to the language in 54/173. Thus, for these resolutions that aim to advance elections and participatory democracy, we see China abstain because it clearly poses a threat to the CCP with such elections nationwide and with participatory democracy.

As stated previously, there has been some controversy regarding the UNGA resolutions on religion. However, because the number of votes on freedom of religion was minimal—only 8 votes in the first decade of the 2000s (one vote each year from 2003-2010) and 4 votes in the 1970s (1972, 2 votes in 1974, and one vote in 1978) on “religious intolerance”—it does not have a significant impact on China’s

overall voting record in the UNGA. The language contained in the 12 resolutions on religion is very similar. Here is the language from the 2005 UNGA resolution on “combating defamation of religions”: “Urges States to take resolute action to prohibit the dissemination through political institutions and organizations of racist and xenophobic ideas and material aimed at any religion or its followers that constitute incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.” Thus, this may be of concern for limiting free speech.

The category on freedom of travel addressed freedom of foreign movement and freedom of domestic movement in the CIRI data, with an example of: “respect for the universal freedom of travel and the vital importance of family reunification.” This category included 10 resolutions, and China voted for all 10 resolutions.

China’s voting pattern on physical integrity resolutions is very telling regarding my central argument in this dissertation. Since physical integrity rights is the area where China performs very poorly domestically and is concerned about, China has not voted in the affirmative on such UNGA human rights resolutions that focus on physical integrity rights. This category included disappearance, extrajudicial killing, political imprisonment, and torture in the CIRI data, and it included 11 UNGA resolutions. One example read: “to strongly condemn the apartheid regime of South Africa for its brutal repression and indiscriminate torture

567 The CIRI data also included a physical integrity rights index that aggregated these four categories.
and killings.” Of the 11 resolutions, China voted in the affirmative on only 4 resolutions. Thus, China voted in the affirmative only 36 percent of the time on physical integrity rights resolutions. Among the physical integrity resolutions, China only voted in the affirmative for the votes that denounced the apartheid government of South Africa. For example, China voted in the affirmative on: 37/1, “Appeal for clemency in favour of South African freedom fighters,” in 1982; 37/68, “Further appeal for clemency in favour of South African freedom fighters” in 1982; 37/69, “Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa,” in 1982; and 44/1, “Death sentence passed on a South African patriot,” in 1989.

Resolution 37/1, “Appeal for clemency in favour of South African freedom fighters,” aimed to pressure the South African government to grant clemency to three “freedom fighters.” Building on Resolution 37/1, Resolution 37/68 aimed for the South African government to grant clemency to six “freedom fighters” in South Africa and stated: “Deeply concerned that the South African authorities have not yet heeded the General Assembly's appeal for clemency contained in its resolution 37/1...” China voted for 37/1 also. Regarding resolution 44/1, “Death sentence passed on a South African patriot,” the resolution called for governments and transnational movements to take action to do what they can to prevent the

execution of the individual who was scheduled to be executed.\textsuperscript{575} Thus, by voting in the affirmative on a resolution that calls for naming and shaming, the Chinese government signed off on an attempted naming and shaming campaign against the apartheid South African government. Thus, China, by voting in the affirmative, aimed to pressure the South African government to not move forward with the execution of six people in South Africa and thus interfered with another country’s domestic affairs.

China chose to abstain for many of the physical integrity votes. For example, on all of the resolutions entitled: “Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions,” which had votes in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012, China abstained on each vote. The 2002 resolution (57/214)\textsuperscript{576} praised the ICCPR, which China signed but did not ratify, and it praised the ICC, which China is not part of. The document also states that it is: “Dismayed that in a number of countries impunity, the negation of justice, continues to prevail and often remains the main cause of the continuing occurrence of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions in those countries.”\textsuperscript{577} The document went on to state that it calls for an end to “extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.”\textsuperscript{578} Then it stated it is calling on states that still have the death penalty to adhere to international human rights law on this issue. Thus, it is clear why China did not vote in the affirmative on resolution 57/214. In the 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012 resolutions, the language is essentially, and in many cases is, identical with the resolution from 2004. Since China has performed very badly on

\textsuperscript{575} \url{http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/44/1}
\textsuperscript{578} \url{http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/57/214}
physical integrity rights, as noted in the CIRI dataset, it is not surprising that China voted against such votes on physical integrity rights.

Regarding developing countries and human rights practice, we see a significant pattern by China. China only voted in the affirmative on human rights if the developing country was a colony of an advanced country. For example, regarding South Africa, China voted in the affirmative to support a naming and shaming campaign against the South African government because it was the apartheid government. Regarding the goal of advancing human rights in developing countries that were not under colonial rule, China sided with the governments of developing countries because of the argument advanced in this dissertation: China does not want to do anything that may result in a threat to the CCP, which reflects the Chinese government’s acting in a manner to advance its preferences.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has advanced the main argument of the dissertation: the Chinese government is concerned about perceived threats to CCP rule and acts based on such perceived threats to its rule. In addition, this chapter has put forward some novel findings of China’s voting behavior on human rights resolutions in the UNGA. Based on a new dataset that identifies UNGA human rights resolutions from 1971 to 2012, I reveal in this chapter when China is inclined to vote in the affirmative on such resolutions and when it chooses to either abstain or vote against. Overall, China’s voting behavior is in contrast to its poor domestic practice as indicated by the CIRI dataset, as China consistently votes in the affirmative for the
vast majority of human rights resolutions in the UNGA. However, as I have argued, China voted in the affirmative on such resolutions because it did not want to be targeted by its fellow NAM countries and thus China avoided a potential threat to CCP rule.

Overall, China’s level of voting in the affirmative was on average higher than 90 percent and it never dropped below 70 percent over the time period from 1971 to 2012. When China did experience a drop it was due to the resolutions that targeted the governments of developing countries. China voted for human rights resolutions that denounced Israel, the UK, Portugal, and other Western states, but China does not vote for comparable resolutions that target the governments of developing countries. Prior to the 1990s, since there were not many resolutions in the UNGA on human rights that condemned the governments of developing countries, China’s level of voting in the affirmative was relatively high. In the early post-Cold War years, however, the US wanted the UNGA to focus on human rights issues in countries where it wanted political change, such as Cuba, Iran, Iraq, and Sudan.\textsuperscript{579} As a result, China abstained or voted against human rights resolutions for many of these country-specific resolutions because it did not want to establish a dangerous precedent in which it may be targeted itself with similar resolutions, and thus its level of voting in the affirmative on human rights resolutions significantly dropped in 1991. As the resolutions on Israel began to appear more frequently in the 2000s, China’s level of voting in the affirmative on country specific resolutions started to increase during this time period. If the resolutions on Israel are dropped

\textsuperscript{579} Volgy, Frazier and Ingersoll, 2003: 61.
from country-specific resolutions, China’s favoring ratio of human rights resolutions was fairly low since the early 1990s.

This chapter focused on the Chinese government altering its level of voting behavior on human rights resolutions in the UNGA based on the potential threat to CCP rule. China’s voting on all of the categories of resolutions examined in this chapter (country-specific; physical integrity rights; self-determination; religion; freedom of movement) fits my overall argument. Regarding physical integrity rights, China only voted for the physical integrity resolutions that denounced the apartheid government in South Africa. It did not vote for the other ample physical integrity resolutions on “Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions” due to such perceived threat to CCP existence.

When studying this topic of how China has voted in the UNGA on the 704 human rights resolutions that I identified, it is essential to examine the given resolutions and how China voted on the particular resolutions. In total, China voted in the affirmative on the vast majority, due to how the resolutions were essentially, what I would call, safe resolutions. That is, votes denouncing colonial governments, such as Portugal, UK, apartheid government in South Africa, is consistent with China’s solidarity with the NAM/Global South in general. When it came to condemning the governments in developing countries on such human rights abuses, advancing democracy globally, or advancing physical integrity rights globally, then China did not vote in the affirmative. That is a very significant pattern to be aware of. For the safe resolutions, or resolutions in which it was perceived there would be little potential blowback to the CCP, China voted in the affirmative. But on the hard
resolutions, or those advancing democracy, promoting physical integrity rights, and votes condemning the governments of developing countries, China voted to advance its interests and hinder any potential threat to CCP existence. Again, rational choice’s emphasis on actors acting in a manner to advance their preferences adequately explains Chinese actions on human rights explored in this dissertation. In the next chapter, I will focus in-depth on China’s voting and statements on country-specific human rights resolutions.

Category 1: Human rights in general

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of resolution</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chile, Trust Fund</td>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>Civil, Political Rights</td>
<td>1984</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commission on human rights</td>
<td>1982</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composition for the staff of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Declaration of Human Rights</td>
<td>1973</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education, Human Rights</td>
<td>1972</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow-up..fact-finding mission on Gaza conflict</td>
<td>2009, 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geographic distribution, human rights committee</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Votes</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights, Armed Conflicts</td>
<td>3 votes in 1972, 2 votes in 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights, Belarus</td>
<td>2006, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights, Bolivia</td>
<td>1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Rights, Future Approach</td>
<td>1977</td>
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<td>Human Rights, High Commissioner</td>
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<td>Human Rights, Improvements</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>Human rights, international cooperation</td>
<td>1996, 1997</td>
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<td>Human Rights, mental health</td>
<td>1978, 1980</td>
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<td>Human rights, occupied Kuwait</td>
<td>1990, 1991</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Votes/Year</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Rights, Syria</td>
<td>2011, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human rights, UN system</td>
<td>2003, 2004, 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human rights, Uzbekistan</td>
<td>1994</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Covenants on Human Rights</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Tribunal—former Yugoslavia, Financing</td>
<td>2009</td>
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<td>Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinians</td>
<td>2003, 2004, 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical and mental health</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>Purpose of human rights</td>
<td>1982</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial Intolerance</td>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>Racism, fight against</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racism, world conference</td>
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<td>Racist Regimes</td>
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<td>Repression of Africans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restoration of the rights of membership of Libya in the Human Rights Council</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<td><strong>Review of the Human Rights Council</strong></td>
<td>2011</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Right to Housing</strong></td>
<td>1986, 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Right to property; property</strong></td>
<td>1986, 1988</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rights of Peoples to Peace</strong></td>
<td>1984</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social, economic, political rights</strong></td>
<td>1985</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>South Africa, Assistance</strong></td>
<td>1988, 1990</td>
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<td><strong>South Africa, Inalienable Rights</strong></td>
<td>1977</td>
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<td><strong>South Africa, Regime Effects</strong></td>
<td>1978</td>
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<td><strong>Southern Africa</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The human right to water and sanitation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The human rights situation arising from the recent Israeli military operations in Lebanon</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UN Education and Training Program</strong></td>
<td>1971, 1972</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Well-Being of populations</strong></td>
<td>2 votes in 1981</td>
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<td><strong>Working Group on the Commission on Human Rights</strong></td>
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**Category 2: Freedom of religion**

<table>
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<th><strong>Title of resolution</strong></th>
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**Category 3: Women's rights**

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<th><strong>Title of resolution</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Crimes against women</strong></td>
<td>2000</td>
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<td><strong>Decade for Women</strong></td>
<td>1975, 1980, 1983</td>
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<td><strong>Declaration of Mexico</strong></td>
<td>1975</td>
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<td><strong>Discrimination against Women</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Employment of Women</strong></td>
<td>1972</td>
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### Equality of Women

- 1979

### Status of Women

- 1979

### Women’s Program Offices

- 1984

### Women’s Rights

- 1975, 1977

### World Conference on Women

- 1995

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**Category 4: Freedom of self-determination**

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<th>Title of resolution</th>
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<td>Anguilla</td>
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<td>Caribbean Territories</td>
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<td>Decolonization, Information</td>
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<td>Djibouti, self-determination</td>
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<td>Enhancing the role of...in promoting and consolidating democracy</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>Independence, Colonial Countries</td>
<td>2 votes in 1972, 2 votes in 1974</td>
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<td>Military Installations</td>
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<td>Niue and Tokelau Islands</td>
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<td>Niue, Self-Determination</td>
<td>1973</td>
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<td>Pacific Territories</td>
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<td>Pretoria, racial election</td>
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<td>Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and diversity of democratic systems in electoral processes</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>Saharan Populations</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>1980</td>
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<td>Death Penalty</td>
<td>1989</td>
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<td>Executions, Arbitrary</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<td>South Africa, Death Sentences; executions</td>
<td>2 votes in 1982; 1989</td>
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<td>South Africa, Regime Actions</td>
<td>1982</td>
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<td>Torture</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<td>Category 5: Physical integrity rights</td>
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<td>1978</td>
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<td>Self-determination, human rights</td>
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<td>Seychelles</td>
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<td>South Africa, Oppressed People</td>
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<td>South Africa, self-determination</td>
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<td>Southern Africa, self-determination</td>
<td>1982</td>
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<td>Southern Rhodesia/ Zimbabwe</td>
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<td>Sovereignty, Natural Resources</td>
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<td>U.S. Territories, Self-Determination</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>UK Territories, Self-determination</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>Western Sahara</td>
<td>1978, 1982, 1984</td>
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</table>
Category 6: Freedom of travel

<table>
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<th>Title of resolution</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
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<td>International migration and development</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 6: Country-specific UNGA resolutions: Calling out developed countries but protecting developing countries on human rights resolutions.

Abstract

In keeping with the main focus of the previous chapter, this chapter also reveals the pattern of how the Chinese government votes in the UNGA on human rights based on the threat level to CCP rule. In this chapter, I examine China’s voting in the UNGA on country specific resolutions that contain a human rights component and its statements on country specific human rights issues. Regarding country specific resolutions on human rights, there is a stark contrast in China’s voting. Based on both the quantitative and qualitative analysis in this chapter regarding
China’s voting on country specific resolutions and its statements, it is not accurate to argue that China is opposed to country specific resolutions, as China has voted in the affirmative on many country specific resolutions. For example, the Chinese government has consistently voted to criticize Israel and Western states (such as Portuguese involvement in Africa) regarding human rights issues. However, the Chinese government almost always refuses to condemn human rights abuses in developing countries with both its statements at the UN and its voting, as such reflects the Chinese government’s preferences.

*Introduction*

In this chapter, In addition to examining China’s voting pattern on country specific human rights resolutions, I also examine unedited statements or primary documents from Chinese officials at the UN on such human rights topics from the years 2000 to 2014. Thus, these statements offer a window into how the Chinese government speaks about human rights at the UN. This chapter significantly adds to the overall argument of the dissertation by examining such statements. In short, this chapter demonstrates that China’s actions on human rights in the UNGA on country specific resolutions reflect my use of rational choice to argue that the Chinese government acts to advance its preferences based on potential threats to CCP rule. In the previous chapter, when I examined China’s voting on physical integrity rights and self-determination, many of those resolutions, as I stated in that chapter, had a country-specific component. The voting pattern that I established in that chapter is also evident here: China does not vote in the affirmative on human
rights resolutions that denounce a developing country, for China seeks to be on good terms with developing countries. Since I already examined physical integrity votes and self-determination votes in the previous chapter, I will not address that here. Instead, the content analysis in this chapter is on category 1 resolutions (the category of broad human rights in general) that are country specific. An example of the UNGA resolutions that I examine in this chapter is: resolution 53/161, “The situation of human rights in Nigeria.”

In this chapter, I demonstrate that China’s solidarity with NAM countries is conducted as a way to shore up support from such NAM countries, which means that NAM countries will not press China on human rights resolutions in the UNGA. Thus, China will not have a threat to CCP rule. It is no coincidence that China has consistently voted in the affirmative on human rights resolutions if the resolutions condemn human rights abuses by Israel, Britain, or Portugal on the one hand, and on the other has consistently either abstained or voted against human rights resolutions if they criticize the government of a developing country.

As a way to shore up support for the CCP, the Chinese government welcomes the opportunity to highlight positive comments that outside observers have issued regarding China’s approach to human rights. In a 2015 Xinhua article, “Foreign expert lauds China’s human rights philosophy, participation in aiding African nations,” the Chinese media advanced the notion that outside observers laud China’s approach to human rights. In short, this is exactly the kind of news that China wants to advance. The article focused on a human rights professor from

Utrecht University in Holland, Tom Zwart, who offered much praise for China’s actions in Africa, such as its no strings attached or conditions to the aid. The following was the first sentence of that article: “A foreign human rights expert has lauded China’s human rights philosophy and participation in aiding African nations and urged China to share its Chinese dream and wisdom with the international community.”

Aiming to capitalize on the comments of another figure on China’s approach to human rights in the UN, the Chinese news source CCTV ran a 2012 article with the title “United Nations enjoys ‘strong support’ from China.” In the article, it cited UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon saying that China is a strong supporter of the UN on the issues of “peacekeeping, development, human rights and humanitarian assistance.”

The article quoted Ban stating: “‘I’m very much grateful for China’s continuing support and global role China is playing in the international community.’” This positive endorsement from the Secretary General is exactly what China welcomes in terms of presenting itself as a positive force in the world and thus posing little threat to the CCP.

**Chinese UNGA country specific voting behavior and statements**

*Refusing to call out developing countries on human rights*

Regarding UNGA country-specific human rights resolutions, China’s voting pattern reveals that it almost always votes against country specific human rights resolutions that condemn the governments of developing states that repress its
people. However, regarding country specific human rights resolutions in the UNGA, China has voted in favor of such human rights resolutions if the resolutions condemned a Western country’s actions in a developing country or is the resolutions condemned Israel for its human rights violations of Palestinians. In short, China voted in favor of human rights resolutions that voiced support for people being oppressed in developing countries if the actors abusing such people were from developed countries. In other words, China did not vote in favor of human rights resolutions that condemned a developing country’s government.

There have been ample country-specific UNGA resolutions that focus on or admonish a specific country due to human rights abuses. For example, there were many votes that condemned Portugal for its actions in specific countries in Africa. Such votes aimed to advance human rights for African people that the Portuguese government was denying. In short, regarding China’s voting behavior on country specific resolutions that aim to admonish states for human rights abuses, China is willing to call out developed states, but it is unwilling to vote for resolutions that condemn developing states. This voting pattern is consistent throughout the 1971 to 2012 time period. I argue that this voting pattern is due to the perceived threat to CCP rule, as the Chinese government is very concerned about staying in power and does not want itself to be subjected to such votes in the UNGA by other NAM countries. Thus, China votes in solidarity with other NAM countries to prevent such a potential threat to CCP rule.

When examining the content of country specific resolutions that target developing countries, it is clear why China is uncomfortable with the language
continued in the resolutions. A 1999 resolution (53/157), “Situation of human rights in Iraq,” has many specific criticisms of the Iraqi government on human rights issues.\(^{586}\) For example, the resolution states: “notes with dismay that there has been no improvement in the situation of human rights in the country.”\(^{587}\) The resolution also stated: “Strongly condemns the systematic, widespread and extremely grave violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law by the Government of Iraq, resulting in all-pervasive repression and oppression.”\(^{588}\) All of the resolutions that I examined with the title, “Situation of human rights in...,” contained many sentences that admonished the governments of developing countries for specific human rights abuses. Thus, the content of such resolutions is very similar.

Among the large amount of resolutions condemning human rights violations in developing countries, there were only six cases in which China voted in the affirmative on such human rights resolutions and in so doing criticized the government of a developing country. Of these six cases, there were three resolutions on human rights in Afghanistan for the years 1985, 1986, and 1987.\(^{589}\) During that time, the Soviet Union was working with the Afghan government in the civil war and the resolutions contained language criticizing the foreign involvement or “foreign forces.” There were two resolutions on “Occupied Kuwait,”\(^{590}\) regarding

Saddam Hussein’s invasion of that country. The remaining resolution was on Guatemala. This pattern is very telling about China’s voting in the UNGA on country-specific resolutions. The rest of the time, China did not criticize a developing country’s human rights or vote for human rights and in the process criticize the developing country’s government. Thus, with the UNGA country-specific votes in which China voted in favor of human rights resolutions, and in doing so voted to criticize the government of a developing country, we see much strategic calculation on China’s part. In short, given that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was widely condemned, as was Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, it was unthreatening for the Chinese government to vote for resolutions that condemned those two governments, as international public opinion was against the Soviet Union and Iraq on those two actions.

Regarding statements that the Chinese delegation has offered on country specific human rights resolutions in the UN, on November 19, 2009 Chinese delegate Zhang Dan stated that China is disappointed with the country specific human rights resolution targeting Myanmar.\(^{591}\) Zhang stated that such a resolution is not productive and the focus should be on international cooperation to advance human rights. This public statement by the Chinese delegate offers the public view for why China votes against country specific human rights resolutions. However, it does not explain why China votes to criticize developed countries on human rights. If China held a consistent position, it would vote the same way on all country-specific human rights votes. Regarding the 1999 UNGA resolution that targeted Myanmar, 53/162,

“Situation of human rights in Myanmar,” the resolution stated: “Gravely concerned at the continuing and consistent violations of human rights in Myanmar.” This 1999 resolution was very similar with the resolutions that denounced the government of Iraq for numerous human rights abuses.

Also on November 19, 2009 Chinese delegate Zhang Dan stated that regarding China’s position on the “Situation of human rights in DPRK,” it will vote against the resolution. Zhang stated that China has been consistent in its opposition to country specific human rights resolutions. However, as I have pointed out, this is not an accurate statement by Zhang, as China votes in the affirmative on human rights resolutions that target developed states. Zhang went on to state: “We are against using country specific human rights resolutions as a way to exert political pressure on developing countries.” Notice that she did not say anything about Israel or developed countries. Instead, Zhang stated “developing countries.” Since China has voted in the affirmative to denounce human rights abuses that are country specific for advanced countries, such as Israel, Portugal, and the UK, Zhang was careful not to generalize and instead limited her statement to “developing countries.”

In 2014, China maintained its support for the DPRK in this same manner. In an article released by Xinhua, on March 18, 2014, when Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei was asked about UNHRC examining human rights conditions in the DPRK, Hong Lei stated that the focus should be on international cooperation in addressing

593 http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rqwt/t628146.htm
human rights issues and not infringing on other countries sovereignty. Thus, Hong Lei essentially defended the DPRK’s actions on human rights by invoking sovereignty as cover. However, China’s support for the DPRK on human rights abuses is not really about respecting sovereignty of the DPRK, as China has voted and issued statements on human rights abuses regarding advanced countries. Instead, the main issue for China’s support of the DPRK is the desire to prevent any potential threat to the CCP by other NAM countries. In other words, the Chinese government acts in the UN to advance its preferences in advancing developing countries.

China also came to the defense of the Sri Lankan government on human rights abuses, as pointed out in a Xinhua article on February 11, 2014. The article stated that the US led a movement at the UN for UNHRC to propose a resolution critical of the Sri Lankan government on human rights. The article quoted China’s Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, as saying: “‘China opposes some countries’ interference in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka under the pretext of human rights issues.’” The reasons provided by Foreign Minister Wang Yi clearly reveal the concern the Chinese government has regarding its potential threat to CCP rule and why China acts the way it does on human rights in the UN. The February 11, 2014 article paraphrased Wang as saying: “China backs the Sri Lankan government in safeguarding national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.” Those issues are all concerns for the Chinese government, as those pose clear threats to

CCP rule. Thus, rational choice’s emphasis on actors acting in a manner to advance their preferences explains how the Chinese government acts in the UN on the human rights issues explored in this dissertation.

*Calling out developed countries on human rights*

In a statement at the UN on March 27, 2001, the Chinese delegate stated that the countries that have benefited from the current international system should modify the system in a manner that benefits many countries—not just the already advanced countries. The delegate stated: “various countries [essentially the West] should promote the democratization of international relations, establish a fair and equitable international political and economic order, and guarantee the right of equal participation of developing countries in the decision-making of global and economic affairs.” Other statements contained similar language and message: stating that certain counties (i.e. the West) are criticizing other countries on human rights abuses while not admitting the human rights abuses in their own countries. By issuing such statements in the UN, we see that China is willing to engage in country specific criticism on human rights issues. Once again, China is criticizing the West—not developing countries on human rights.

On February 28, 2001 the Chinese Information Office of the State Council released their document “China Issues Article on U.S. Human Rights Conditions.” In that article, the Chinese government went to great lengths to admonish the US

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government for what the Chinese government views as human right abuses in the US. The Chinese document called out the US for gun violence, gun policies, the US’s death penalty, the flaws with the death penalty, such as poor people not being able to hire a legal team, people being falsely accused of crimes they did not commit, massive spending on the US criminal justice system, income gap between rich and poor in the US, poverty, and women being paid less than men. In short, the 2001 document that China issued on human rights issues in the US, made the case that there are many human rights abuses in the US, as the document went into detail about very specific examples in which the Chinese government views the US as performing poorly on human rights issues.603 In 2009, the Chinese Information Office of the State Council published a similar report, “Human Rights Record of the US in 2008,” in which the same issues received extensive coverage.604 It even criticized the US government on 1) civil and political rights (pointing to illegal surveillance by the FBI; the criminal justice system), 2) economic, social and cultural rights, 3) racial discrimination, 4) rights for women and children, and 5) violating human rights abroad (pointing to the war in Iraq).605 In short, this makes it very clear that China is indeed willing to admonish other governments on country specific human rights abuses.

In a 2014 Xinhua article, with its title, “What can U.S., ‘preacher of human rights,’ learn from China?”606 the article highlighted the racism and discrimination in the US towards African Americans, specifically mentioning the Ferguson, Missouri

603 http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rqwt/t26859.htm
605 http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rqwt/t539630.htm
case of Michael Brown. The article also made reference to a study about the pay gap in the US between men and women. Thus, we see China engaging in country-specific criticism of the US on human rights and making the case that the US does not have a good domestic human rights practice.

On January 28, 2002 Mr. Xie Bohua, a Chinese delegate to the UNGA, stated that those countries (the West) that abused other countries during “Colonialism, foreign occupation, the slave trade and apartheid” did much harm to people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Xie Bohua then went on to add that those countries should “face up to historical reality, learn from past mistakes and take effective measures to help developing countries to overcome as soon as possible economic backwardness and the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots.” Thus, Xie’s language targeted the West. This statement is consistent with the pattern of voting that China has demonstrated and was revealed in my earlier chapter on China’s voting in the UNGA.

At the UN on April 1, 2003, Chinese Delegate Sha Zukang specifically addressed naming and shaming by the West and how it will not find a receptive audience in the Global South. Thus, as I argued in the literature review section of this dissertation, naming and shaming has not been effective in promoting human rights in China. Delegate Sha stated: “Today, they [Western countries as he stated in the previous sentence] are still trying to convince us that naming and shaming developing countries—the erstwhile colonies—for criticism and tabling country-

608 http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rqwt/t29325.htm
609 http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rqwt/t29325.htm
specific resolutions are for the sole purpose of helping them to improve their human rights according to the will and standard of the developed countries.”\(^{611}\) The language contained in the previous statement reveals how the Chinese government views the situation between developed and developing countries as one of antagonism. Moreover, it is a clear indication that naming and shaming China on human rights will not be effective if China views such charges as threatening to CCP rule.

In a statement on October 31, 2001, the Chinese delegate, Mr. Xie Bohua, offered a critical statement on Israel, which reflects the argument in this chapter on China’s voting in the UNGA as China voted to condemn Israel on human rights abuses in Palestine/Palestinians: “We are worried by the continued armed invasion of Palestinian-controlled areas by Israeli troops and the tense situation thus created.”\(^{612}\) Mr. Xie went on to add: “The right to national self-determination is an important part of human rights and represents a sacred right of all peoples, especially the oppressed nations, to fight against imperialism and colonial rule and for independence and national liberation.”\(^{613}\) Thus, Xie’s statement on self-determination provides an adequate explanation for why the Chinese government has consistently voted in the affirmative regarding that category of UNGA resolutions when the resolutions specifically aim to provide self-determination to colonial people being ruled by a Western power. Mr. Xie went on to provide a comment that could also be used by the Chinese government to go against

\(^{611}\) [http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rtqwt/t29336.htm](http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rtqwt/t29336.htm)


international calls for autonomy in restive places in China such as Tibet and Xinjiang and for Taiwan: “In recent years, some quarters [i.e. the West] have blatantly advocated the splitting of sovereign countries in the name of the right to national self-determination. Their activities of undermining state integrity and national unity should be condemned and resolutely opposed by the whole world.” Therefore, the previous statement reflects the CCP’s concern about domestic threat and international calls that may result in domestic action.

On April 1, 2003, Chinese delegate Sha Zukang offered very strong words here. Sha stated that while China views political confrontation and country-specific resolutions as unproductive, he stated that China is not afraid of political confrontation. “Whoever provokes confrontation, we will have to fight to the end.” Thus, China signaled that it is willing to engage in a verbal battle with the West over human rights.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined both China’s voting behavior in the UNGA on country specific human rights resolutions and its statements in the UN on country specific human rights issues. Contrary to the argument often cited that China has significant emphasis on sovereignty and avoids country specific criticisms, I demonstrated that China is indeed willing to engage in country specific human rights issues, which I argue is explained by rational choice’s emphasis that actors act in a manner to advance their preferences. I demonstrated how China has

consistently voted in the affirmative to call out developed countries on human rights resolutions. Moreover, China has issued statements that specific denounce the US for a poor domestic human rights practice. I have argued that the threat level to CCP rule explains this Chinese pattern, as remaining in power is the paramount objective of the CCP. In short, China does not vote in the affirmative to denounce developing countries on human rights because of its solidarity with non-aligned movement (NAM) countries and thus aims for not being targeted by such NAM countries.

When NAM countries are the victims of human rights abuse by developed countries, China maintains this solidarity with such NAM countries and votes to denounce the developed countries. However, when the people in NAM counties are being abused by their own governments, then China does not vote to advance human rights in such developing countries. Instead, China maintains its support for the human rights abusing governments because it does not want to be targeted itself by such governments in the UNGA.

Country-specific resolutions:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Resolution</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<td>Chile, Trust Fund</td>
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<td>Follow-up..fact-finding mission on Gaza conflict</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights, Belarus</td>
<td>2006, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights, Bolivia</td>
<td>1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human rights, occupied Kuwait</td>
<td>1990, 1991</td>
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<td>Human Rights, Syria</td>
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<td>Human rights, Turkmenistan</td>
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<td>Human rights, Uzbekistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Tribunal—former Yugoslavia, Financing</td>
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<td>Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinians</td>
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<td>South Africa, Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Africa, Inalienable Rights</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region/Issue</td>
<td>Year(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Africa, Regime Effects</td>
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<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<tr>
<td>The human rights situation arising from the recent Israeli military operations in Lebanon</td>
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<td>1975</td>
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<td>Anguilla</td>
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<td>Caribbean Territories</td>
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<td>2 votes in 1972, 2 votes in 1974</td>
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<td>Pacific Territories</td>
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<td>Pakistan, self-determination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portuguese Territories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretoria, racial election</td>
<td>1988</td>
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<td>Saharan Populations</td>
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<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>1972, 1973</td>
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<td>South Africa, Oppressed People</td>
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<td>South Africa, self-determination</td>
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<td>Southern Africa, self-determination</td>
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<td>Spanish Sahara</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>U.S. Territories, Self-Determination</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK Territories, Self-determination</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Sahara</td>
<td>1978, 1982, 1984</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 7: Concern about the domestic threat: Four Cases revealing the pattern

Abstract

In contrast to the many non-binding resolutions that China voted in the affirmative on in the UNGA, this chapter focuses on concrete actions that the Chinese implemented regarding human rights issues in Tibet, Xinjiang, Darfur, and with a prominent dissident, Liu Xiaobo. The cases of Tibet and Xinjiang, which involve oppressed minority groups, offer a stark contrast to China’s voting in the affirmative on comparable issues in the UNGA. The case of Liu Xiaobo offers the opportunity to compare China’s voting in the UNGA on self-determination issues and elections with its domestic practice and treatment of activists, such as Liu Xiaobo. This chapter focuses on four significant events in which China received ample international criticism regarding its human rights practice or its actions in hindering human rights progress in the UN in another country (Sudan). For these four events, international actors carried out naming and shaming campaigns to change Chinese government behavior on the human rights issues. Regarding the three domestic cases, such naming and shaming campaigns were utterly ineffective in bringing about any positive change for human rights, which fits neatly with the argument advanced in this dissertation that the Chinese government acts to advance its preferences on human rights. This chapter, like the other main chapters in this
dissertation, advances the central argument of this dissertation: using rational
choice, I argue that the way the Chinese government reacted to events was due to
the perceived threat level to CCP rule. In short, this chapter assesses the Chinese
government’s actual domestic practice on significant human rights issues that also
occurred during the time period of this study.

Introduction

In contributing to the main argument of this dissertation, this chapter seeks to
examine under what circumstances China will resist international pressure (i.e.
naming and shaming) regarding human rights issues both domestically and abroad
by examining several events that have heretofore not been examined together. In
this chapter, using rational choice’s emphasis that actors act to advance their
preferences, I argue that the Chinese government’s perceived threat to CCP rule
determined the way it reacted to calls for improved human rights in the cases
examined here, with its fears of Xinjiang and Tibet becoming independent, and with
the end of CCP rule, with the case of Liu Xiaobo. Thus, under these conditions (the
threat of losing territory or the threat to CCP rule), we can expect the Chinese
government to act in a way that is all about survival for the CCP.

Regarding Darfur, while China was not involved in the genocide carried out
there that clearly violated the human rights of the non-Arab population in Darfur,
the Chinese government’s lack of willingness to take action in the UNSC early on has
been regarded as China’s acquiescence in massive human rights violations in Darfur.
In late 2007, China applied pressure to the Sudanese government to allow UN
peacekeepers and China did not veto UNSC resolutions on Sudan. Having said that regarding Chinese government pressuring the Sudanese government, the Chinese government never pressured its state-owned companies operating in Sudan to pull out of the country.

Below I provide a chart in which I explain how the Chinese government reacted to the four main observations in this chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Issues at stake for the CCP</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-2008</td>
<td>Sudan/Darfur</td>
<td>International—not domestic territory and not a main core interest; not a major threat to CCP rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Tibet</td>
<td>Domestic territory; main core interest; serious perceived threat to CCP rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Xinjiang</td>
<td>Domestic territory; main core interest; serious perceived threat to CCP rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Liu Xiaobo</td>
<td>Political openness in China; main core interest; serious perceived threat to CCP rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Action Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2008</td>
<td>Sudan/Darfur</td>
<td>China modified its actions because there was not a threat to the CCP nor domestic territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Tibet</td>
<td>Rejected international criticism due to the threat level to CCP rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Xinjiang</td>
<td>Rejected international criticism due to the threat level to CCP rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Liu Xiaobo</td>
<td>Rejected international criticism due to fear of end of CCP rule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Human rights events and China’s perceived threat to CCP rule**

*Tibet in 2008*

In March of 2008, Tibet erupted in violence. In presenting a one-sided image of the events in Tibet, the Chinese media and government depicted Tibetans as on a violent rampage. The Chinese media did not focus on the peaceful protests by Tibetans in the four days leading up to the 14 March 2008 riot in Lhasa nor did the media focus on the peaceful protests in the weeks after the riot. Instead, the riot received all the attention by the Chinese media.\(^{616}\) The Tibetan protest on 10 March 2008 started because of Tibetan frustration with the Chinese government’s policies in that province.\(^{617}\) That day, 10 March, was the anniversary of the Dalai Lama’s fleeing to India, and thus that day has significance for Tibetans. Another grievance among Tibetans was the view that non-Tibetans are the ones who have profited

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\(^{616}\) Callahan, 2010: 127.

\(^{617}\) Yang, 2008: 245.
from the government spending in Tibet—not Tibetans.\textsuperscript{618} Even though the CCP has spent much money in developing Tibet, it has not won over Tibetans.\textsuperscript{619}

Given that the timing of the March 2008 riot was just a few months prior to the much-anticipated Beijing Olympics, we should have witnessed a reaction from the Chinese government that was at least willing to placate its international critics, even if the Chinese government was insincere about implementing political reforms in Tibet. Instead, because of the perceived threat to CCP rule if the Chinese government were to implement meaningful reforms in Tibet, the Chinese government responded with a full counter offensive regarding the international criticism it faced over its handling of that event. In addition, the Chinese government allowed for street protests to support China for the Olympics and to denounce both the West and Western companies, such as Carrefour, that were perceived as being pro-Tibet.\textsuperscript{620} Again, the perceived threat to CCP rule must be taken into account in order to understand why the Chinese government reacted the way it did to this event just several months prior to the most significant mega event that China had ever hosted.

During the Tibetan riots of March 2008, Chinese Internet users criticized the government’s poor response to Tibetans causing havoc on both Han shops and Han Chinese. Because the Chinese government did not want its Internet users targeting the government, it thus changed the focus of the events in Tibet. The government

\textsuperscript{618} Yang, 2008: 245.
\textsuperscript{619} He, 2004: 180.
\textsuperscript{620} For a detailed analysis of the Chinese government’s reaction to events in Tibet in March 2008, see Nyiri and Zhang, 2010; Topgyal, 2011; for a detailed account of the torch relay and the protests it encountered, see Fan and Lu, 2012.
then focused on what it claimed was inaccurate reporting by the West and the violent Tibetans. This played out well with its public, as Chinese citizens became angry at what they viewed as biased and inaccurate Western coverage of Tibet and the torch relay.\textsuperscript{621} The Chinese government turned the violent events in Tibet into an issue to depict China as a victim of the West’s condemnation. As a result of that framing by the Chinese government, many in China viewed the international criticism of the Chinese government’s policies regarding Tibet during that spring as an example of international bashing of their country.\textsuperscript{622}

Since the Chinese government and media constantly aired footage of Tibetans destroying Lhasa after the March 2008 riot, that played a large role in both overseas Chinese and Chinese at home supporting the CCP’s ensuing crack down in Tibet.\textsuperscript{623} As a result of Tibetans and other critics of China protesting China from abroad during the Olympic torch relay, many overseas Chinese also took to the streets abroad to show their support for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Given that ethnic Chinese living abroad took to the streets to support China during the torch relay and condemn those who were not pro-China, this demonstrates how international pressure was not effective in gaining widespread support among Chinese, even ethnic Chinese living abroad. Because the Chinese government has put in much effort to develop the overseas Chinese community, this was important

\textsuperscript{621} Yang, 2008.
\textsuperscript{622} Callahan, 2010.
\textsuperscript{623} Topgyal, 2011; Yang, 2008.
in demonstrating why overseas Chinese strongly supported the Chinese
government.624

After participating as spectators in the overseas torch relay in March and April 2008, overseas Chinese supportive of the Chinese government used social media to their advantage, writing up blogs, uploading pictures and videos, and using other Internet sources to spread their pro-China and pro-Beijing Olympics message. Another goal was to enrage Chinese about what international protestors had done in trying to shame China. Millions in China viewed these postings, and mainland Internet users supported the overseas community in defending China. Chinese Internet users called upon overseas Chinese in other places to attend events where the torch would soon be, support China, and not let anything bad happen to the Chinese flag or the torch.625 Overseas Chinese were determined to not allow protestors of China win the day at the torch relay. Many Chinese who took part in the demonstrations for the torch relay throughout the world were upset with Western media’s coverage of the Tibet.626

Chinese embassies in numerous countries helped out the overseas community in showing support for China in this effort to advance the Chinese argument.627 For example, the Chinese Embassy in Australia provided transportation for thousands of overseas Chinese students to attend the torch relay in Canberra. Due to the help of the Chinese Embassy in mobilizing Chinese overseas students from around Australia, their presence was significantly more than the side

624 Callahan, 2010.
625 Nyiri and Zhang, 2010.
626 Nyiri and Zhang, 2010.
627 Callahan, 2010: 153.
that was sympathetic towards Tibet. In Thailand’s capital, it was a similar scene, with the Chinese Embassy in Bangkok helping to mobilize overseas Chinese students and providing them with pro-China shirts.\textsuperscript{628}

Because of Carrefour being viewed as pro Dalai Lama and supportive of Tibetan independence, Chinese Internet users urged boycotting the French multinational company (MNC) by spreading the message online, sending text messages, and advocated other Chinese to do the same. Given that Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Jiang Yu did not denounce the Carrefour boycott when she addressed it at a press conference on 15 April, many Chinese viewed that as a go ahead for further action against the MNC in China.\textsuperscript{629} As a result, Chinese took to the streets in large numbers in various cities throughout the country.\textsuperscript{630}

Many in the West, including the US House and the US President, were critical of China’s crackdown in Tibet following the riots. Numerous human rights groups throughout the world called for a boycott of the 2008 Games’ opening ceremony.\textsuperscript{631} But in the end, the Chinese government made no concessions on Tibet because such concessions have the potential to result in the demise of CCP rule. It was safer for the Chinese government’s long-term strategy of remaining in power to defy its Western critics than implementing political reforms in Tibet. In short, the Chinese government disregarded international opinion regarding its aggressive policies in Tibet in March 2008.\textsuperscript{632} The Chinese government stating that it would meet with

\textsuperscript{628} Callahan, 2010: 153.
\textsuperscript{629} Cheng, 2009.
\textsuperscript{630} Jacques, 2009.
\textsuperscript{631} Blecher, 2009.
\textsuperscript{632} See Economy and Segal, 2008: 52.
the Dalai Lama shortly over one month after the Chinese government putting down the March protest in Tibet was not about a change in policy regarding Tibet. Instead, it was a trivial action by the Chinese government in order to simply calm the tremendous international criticism it received over its handling of the events in Tibet.\textsuperscript{633} The Chinese government simply stating that it would meet with the Dalai Lama poses no threat to its rule, and thus is a safe call for the Chinese government in terms of remaining in power. In its quest to remain in power, the central government increased patriotic education in Tibet after the March 2008 riots. For example, when China's highest ranking police official, Meng Jianzhu, visited Lhasa after the riots on 23 and 24 March, he stated that patriotic education needed to be implemented in Tibetan Monasteries.\textsuperscript{634}

Because the Chinese government views Tibet with tremendous sensitivity as a leading core interest that could potentially result in a break up of the country, the CCP was unwilling to make any concessions on the issue of Tibet. The Chinese government viewed incurring damage to its international image, even just several months prior to the Beijing Games, as a better alternative than implementing change in Tibet, as change could potentially, from the CCP's viewpoint, result in Tibet becoming independent. In other words, the Chinese government acted to advance its preference, which is adequately explained by rational choice. Independence in Tibet would then serve as the impetus for independence in the province north of Tibet—Xinjiang.

\textsuperscript{633} Economy and Segal, 2008: 52.
\textsuperscript{634} “China and Tibet: Welcome to the Olympics”; “China and Tibet: Not Much of a Celebration”; Wong, 2010; Callahan, 2010.
Xinjiang in 2009

In this section on Xinjiang, I draw from much of my previous research on Xinjiang. For one of my publications, I examined the way newspapers in China covered the 2009 riot in Xinjiang. Much of this section draws from my findings in that article in which I examined newspaper coverage on the topic.

Xinjiang, an area inhabited by Muslims whose roots go back to Turkey, has received ample international concern regarding the plight of the main ethnic group there—Uyghurs. There has been much tension and violence in Xinjiang between Han Chinese and Uyghurs. In the mid-1980s (1985-1989), Xinjiang benefited from a looser political environment, as allowed by Beijing. But with Tiananmen in 1989, Beijing changed this and tightened its grip on Uyghurs. This also fits with the main argument in the dissertation: the Chinese government is very concerned about potential threats to its rule and acts to advance its preferences. Thus, with Tiananmen Square, which was the most significant challenge to CCP rule, the Chinese government decided that implementing aggressive policies in Xinjiang, regarding Uyghurs, would be a safer option than would policies that allowed Uyghurs more political openness.

On 5 July 2009 a massive riot occurred in the capital of Xinjiang in which Uyghurs and Han targeted each other with beatings and killings. In the end, the government stated that 197 people had been killed during the rioting and more than 1,700 were injured. Regarding the 5 July 2009 riot, there were both structural

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635 Primiano, 2013.
causes and a catalyst for the actions that Uyghurs took on that day. There are numerous structural causes that have resulted in Uyghur discontent in China, such as (1) government policies that limit Uyghurs from practicing Islam and (2) the massive Han migration to Xinjiang that has resulted in Uyghur culture being diluted. The catalyst for the 5 July riot was the perceived lack of justice for Uyghurs in far away Guangdong province in the aftermath of a massive brawl there in the city of Shaoguan on 25 June between Han and Uyghurs. The catalyst for the violence on 25 June was a rumor that Uyghurs raped two Han women, but the tense relations between Han and Uyghurs were also essential for this. After the 25 June brawl, Uyghurs in Urumqi wanted action and justice for members of their ethnic group who were victims of the brawl in Guangdong. Thus, it was the perceived lack of justice that led Uyghurs in Urumqi to take to the streets on 5 July.

Due to trade with China, Middle Eastern countries and other countries with sizeable Muslim populations did not denounce the Chinese government for its handling of the events in Xinjiang. The Turkish government, however, did criticize China regarding the July 2009 riots and stated that the UN Security Council should examine this case, which was not well received by Beijing. Turkey’s Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip, even equated Chinese policies in Xinjiang with genocide. But then the Turkish government quickly toned down the heated rhetoric, for interest in the Chinese market was more of a priority. Since the Chinese government did not view the Turkish government’s comments kindly, the Turkish government
backtracked.\textsuperscript{641} Again, the reason why the Chinese government reacted with such anger to the Turkish government’s comments is due to the perceived domestic threat to CCP rule. In short, China had a domestic focus—not an international one—when deciding how to react to the 2009 riot in Xinjiang.

In the following days the riot in Xinjiang, Hu Jintao ordered a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee regarding the riot. The members released a statement that stability was paramount and those responsible for the rioting would receive “severe punishment.”\textsuperscript{642} On 21 July 2009 China’s State Council Information Office in Beijing held a press conference regarding the 5 July riot. During that press conference, a government official stated that the Uyghurs’ goal with the 5 July riot was to have Xinjiang break away from China. This statement from the Chinese government reveals the main argument in this dissertation: the Chinese government is very concerned about any potential threat to CCP rule and acts to advance its preference of maintaining both the CCP and the PRC. The Vice Minister for China’s State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Wu Shimin, stated that neither religious issues nor the Chinese government’s policies regarding ethnic groups played any role in the cause of the rioting.\textsuperscript{643} Due to the lack of political openness in China, the validity of this statement by Wu Shimin could not be examined or tested by non-state actors in China.

In keeping with the CCP thinking of economic development as the solution to all problems, the Chinese government focused on increased infrastructure spending

\textsuperscript{641} Primiano, 2013.
\textsuperscript{642} Guo and Li, 2009.
\textsuperscript{643} “Official: Real purpose of Urumqi riot ‘Xinjiang’s independence.’”
in the years after the 2009 riot.\textsuperscript{644} Approximately one year after the July 2009 riot, the Chinese government held a conference on how to advance Xinjiang economically. The Chinese government aimed to have the per capita GDP level in Xinjiang consistent with the national average by 2015. Moreover, the government aimed that by 2020 poverty would be minimal in the province. In short, this conference focused on economic development for Xinjiang, as issues of Uyghur culture or religion were not viewed as playing a role in the discontent in Xinjiang. The Chinese government designed an economic development package of $100 billion for Xinjiang and the surrounding provinces, including Tibet, with the idea of quelling the discontent in those areas. This funding is not specifically targeted at improving conditions for Uyghurs or Tibetans; instead, it is on overall economic development and infrastructure project. Also in 2010, the Chinese government decided to remove the CCP Party Secretary in Xinjiang, Wang Lequan. During his tenure as the highest-ranking government official in Xinjiang, Wang Lequan adamantly followed the CCP practice of not accommodating Uyghur demands. The person who replaced Wang, Zhang Chunxian, had much experience with the kind of economic development that the central government seeks to implement in Xinjiang. Zhang Chunxian, however, lacked experience in resolving ethnic tensions, which is at the heart of the discontent in Xinjiang.\textsuperscript{645}

The following statement at the UN by Chinese delegate Zhang Yishan on July 24, 2002 is relevant here regarding China’s in Xinjiang after the July 2009 riot. Zhang stated that terrorism is a very serious issue that must be addressed. Zhang

\textsuperscript{644} Primiano, 2013.
\textsuperscript{645} Primiano, 2013: 466-467.
went on to state, “It [terrorism] also constitutes a blatant violation of democracy and human rights and a serious threat to peace, prosperity and development of all countries.” Moreover, “Many countries, including China, have been victims of terrorism.” According the Chinese government, economic development is the solution to prevent such discontent and terrorism. Delegate Zhang stated: “The long-term and effective way of eradicating terrorism is to help solve the increasingly serious problem of development, narrow the gap between the north and the south and between the rich and the poor and increase mutual understanding and dialogue among different countries and civilizations.” Thus, for Zhang and the Chinese government, terrorism is solely about economic issues—not political issues. By stating this position, it also makes it easier for the Chinese government in its attempt to deal with such issues in China, as political reform is a non-starter for the Chinese government. Also on the topic of terrorism, on November 9, 2005 at the UN delegate Che Ying stated: “terrorists and other serious criminal offenders often use asylum as cover to escape from justice and to continue harming the innocent.” The following statement by Che Ying is very telling about China’s actions and concern regarding its citizens, such as Uyghurs after the 2009 riots, who seek asylum abroad. Che stated that the Chinese government does not want people anywhere being approved for refugee status who are not legitimate refugees.

According to Che, the Chinese government does not want situations involving

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refugees to become about political preference. The Chinese government’s view that economic development is the solution to hindering terrorism reflects the preference the Chinese government has on economic development instead of political reform. Since political reform would place the CCP in a threatening position, the Chinese government wants the focus to be solely on economic development.

A report issued by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in October 2009 focused on the July 2009 riot and offered recommendations on what China, other states (such as the US), and various UN agencies should do regarding this incident. For example, regarding the Chinese government’s handling of Uyghurs in the aftermath of the July 2009 riot, HRW called upon the Chinese government to: “Immediately end the practice of enforced disappearances”; “Ensure that all arrests are carried out in accordance with international law”; “Allow independent international investigations into the Urumqi unrest and its aftermath.” HRW’s recommendations, however, do not take into account how the Chinese government operates regarding potential threats to CCP rule, and thus China is unwilling to compromise on issues related to Xinjiang. The report also called upon the UN’s High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNICEF to apply pressure on the Chinese government regarding this incident. Again, such calls have not been well received

651 http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/rqwt/t220872.htm
by the Chinese government because of the overall argument made in this dissertation about China’s actions on perceived threats to its rule.654

Liu Xiaobo in 2010

From the day the Nobel Committee announced that Liu Xiaobo won the Peace Prize for his non-violent advocacy for human rights in China (8 October 2010), until the day of the ceremony (10 December 2010), the Chinese government launched a very aggressive campaign to tarnish Liu Xiaobo as subversive and unpatriotic. Because of Liu’s involvement with a document (Charter 08) that would essentially end CCP rule in China, the Chinese government is very concerned about Liu’s impact. Thus, because of the clear threat to CCP rule with Charter 08, the Chinese government did not perceive any need to heed international calls for improving human rights or allowing Liu to attend the ceremony. For the Chinese government, domestic politics (that is, remaining in power) was the only priority in this case. In addition, with awarding Liu the Peace Prize, the Chinese government viewed it as Westerners attempting to shame China.655

The actions the Chinese government took regarding the handling of this issue reflect the overall argument of this dissertation: On issues the CCP views as potentially leading to its demise, such as political reform in Tibet or Xinjiang, or the explicit calls for political reform contained in Charter 08, the Chinese government

654. A PCR citizen who is a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Pang Xizhe, offered a blistering criticism of HRW’s work in general and to HRW’s reaction to the situation regarding minorities in China. Pang stated: “When China cracked down on terrorist forces or violent crimes, HRW claimed that China failed to protect the rights of its minorities. With such an assertion, HRW is aligning itself with the terrorists.” (Pang, 2015). By using the term terrorist, Pang is implicitly focusing on Uyghurs who the government claims are terrorists.

acts to advance its preferences and is thus unwilling to even engage in debate on such topics, as remaining in power is the main priority. Reflecting rational choice, the Chinese government would rather incur damage to its international image regarding human rights issues than initiate the domestic political reforms on such issues, as such reforms may lead to the demise of the CCP. Since neither Liu nor his family members were able to attend the ceremony on Liu’s behalf, it was the first time since 1936 that the Peace Prize was unable to be claimed.\textsuperscript{656} In reflecting the concern of the Chinese government regarding this specific case, the Chinese government prevented over one hundred Chinese citizens from leaving the country who might attend the ceremony.\textsuperscript{657} There is precedence for other authoritarian regimes allowing family members to receive the Peace Prize for the person in prison. In 1975, the Soviet Union allowed Andrei Sakharov’s wife to receive the Prize for him; in 1991, the Burmese government allowed Aung San Suu Kyi’s son to receive it for her.\textsuperscript{658} In the case of Liu Xiaobo, the award for Liu was placed on a vacant chair. With its actions, the Chinese government made clear how serious a threat to CCP rule they regard the issue involving Liu. Moreover, the CCP demonstrated that it was not willing to acquiesce in the international shaming of its policy regarding Liu being awarded the Peace Prize.

Charter 08, taking its name from Charter 77, which was produced by Jan Patocka, Vaclav Havel, and others in Czechoslovakia in 1977, was released on the 60\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the Universal Declaration Human Rights (UDHR), 10 December

\textsuperscript{656} In 1936, neither Carl von Ossietzky nor a family member of his could leave Nazi Germany to receive it (Harnett, 2013).
\textsuperscript{657} Beja, 2012.
\textsuperscript{658} Hartnett, 2013.
2008, by 303 Chinese citizens from all walks of life. Charter 08 called for human rights and democracy in China. Since Liu and the other framers of the Charter wanted to receive public support for it, this document was uploaded on the Internet, even though the government tried to prevent that from happening. It received more than 10,000 signatures. Liu Xiaobo, who was instrumental to the Charter, was arrested two days prior to Charter 08’s publication.

Prior to the Peace Prize being announced, Beijing made it clear that it would not take it kindly if Liu Xiaobo were to be awarded with it. This was a signal to all of those involved with the Peace Prize decision not to award it to Liu. When it was announced that Liu would receive the prize, the Chinese government did not demonstrate any attempt to work out the different views with the Peace Prize Committee or other advocates (both state and non-state actors) of awarding Liu the Prize, as the domestic threat to CCP rule was paramount. After the announcement that Liu won the prize, the Chinese government urged Western states to stay away from the ceremony in Oslo. Given that it is common for ambassadors in Oslo to visit the ceremony of the Nobel Prize, the Chinese government’s call for boycotting the Peace Prize was distinctly unusual. Beijing stated that this is an issue of national sovereignty and should not receive attention from other states. Moreover, Beijing made it clear to Western states that it did not want other states to celebrate Liu

660 (Beja, 2012; Beja, Fu, and Pils, 2012). Prior to being detained on 8 December 2008 for Charter 08, Liu was jailed for his involvement with Tiananmen 1989 and served 20 months in prison for that (Beja, 2012). In other words, Liu Xiaobo did not first come on the scene with Charter 08. Rather, the Chinese government had been concerned about him since 1989 with his role in Tiananmen (Hartnett, 2013). Thus, Liu has been viewed as a serious threat to CCP rule since 1989.
winning the Prize.\textsuperscript{661} In short, the Chinese government engaged in unprecedented acts in its effort to prevent other states from attending the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony.\textsuperscript{662} These unprecedented actions reflect the Chinese government's domestic focus of remaining in power. In the end, eighteen states with little or no constitutional liberalism\textsuperscript{663} did not send their ambassadors to attend the Peace Prize Ceremony. The Chinese government and the Chinese media made the argument that since eighteen other states did not attend the event, the international community, especially the developing world, was on its side. During this time period, I was living in Shanghai, China and could not access various newspapers online, such as \textit{The New York Times}, \textit{BBC}, and the \textit{Guardian}. Besides those newspapers, the Chinese government censored the phrase “vacant chair,” as the Nobel Peace Prize for Liu Xiaobo was placed on a vacant chair at the award ceremony in Oslo.

Various international actors attempted to name and shame the Chinese government for its handling of Liu being awarded the Peace Prize. In their article prior to Liu being awarded the Peace Prize, Havel, Nemcova, and Maly wrote optimistically about the impact of Liu on his fellow citizens, saying that he is inspiring other Chinese on the idea of freedom.\textsuperscript{664} Prior to the committee awarding Liu with the prize, Havel, Nemcova, and Maly made the argument that it should award Liu the prize. They thought this would put international pressure on the

\textsuperscript{661} Wines, 2010.
\textsuperscript{662} Kinzelbach, 2013.
\textsuperscript{663} The states were: Russia, Cuba, Iraq, Morocco, and Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Colombia, Egypt, Iran, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sudan, Tunisia, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Vietnam (Hartnett, 2013).
\textsuperscript{664} Havel, Nemcova, and Maly, 2010.
Chinese government to free Liu. In short, Havel and his coauthors thought a naming and shaming campaign would be successful in this case. Instead, because of the threat to CCP rule, the Chinese government lashed out at the West, arguing that the West was trying to interfere with China’s own affairs with a person who is deemed a criminal.\(^{665}\) It is essential that actors who aim to bring about human rights changes in China (such as Havel) are aware of the pattern that I establish in this dissertation: If the Chinese government perceives such actions as potentially threatening to its rule, it will not entertain such human rights changes. The case of Liu Xiaobo fits this pattern of posing a serious risk to CCP rule.

*Darfur*

While the previous three events examined in this chapter all occurred within China, the final event (Darfur) occurred outside of China. Thus, the pressing threat to CCP rule was absent. However, the CCP is indeed concerned about the potential precedent its actions abroad and in the UNGA may have for domestic politics in China, as I demonstrated with China’s voting in the UNGA on human rights resolutions. The Chinese government fears that its actions abroad could be used against it domestically in terms of mobilizing outside forces for a humanitarian intervention in places such as Tibet and Xinjiang.\(^{666}\) Moreover, the issue of Darfur involved both China’s demand for oil, a very important commodity for China domestically, and the issue of human rights. Thus, this is a significant event to

\(^{665}\) LaFraniere, 2010; Reuters, 2010.

\(^{666}\) See Wu and Taylor, 2011: 138.
examine regarding the way China reacted to international pressure on human rights.

In 2003, the Sudanese government and the Janjaweed militia, which is an Arab militia, targeted the non-Arab population in Darfur in retaliation for the rebel attack on the Sudanese government. Initially, the Chinese government was opposed to the UN’s early desire for action to secure the situation in Darfur.667 In 2004 and 2005, for example, China emphasized sovereignty issues regarding its opposition to international intervention in Darfur. China’s opposition to international action in Darfur was a major obstacle for such action. The primary reason why Sudan’s president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, was able to resist a UN force in his country as late as August 2006 was due to China’s position on this, with China stating that it would veto a UNSC resolution authorizing international action.668 But as time went on, China modified its position on sovereignty regarding Darfur. Late 2006 marked a turning point regarding China’s stance on Darfur, as at that juncture China became both open to international action regarding Darfur and advocated to the Sudanese government that it initiate peace in Darfur.669

Then, during Hu Jintao’s February 2007 visit to Sudan, it was reported that he and Chinese government officials made clear that the Sudanese government needs to adhere to Kofi Annan’s plan for Sudan.670 Thus, the Chinese government pressured the Sudanese government at that point in February 2007, making it a departure from its previous actions with the Sudanese government. In the following

667 Wu and Taylor, 2011: 146.
669 See Wu and Taylor, 2011: 146.
670 Holslag, 2008: 79.
month, when the Sudanese president objected to the UN plan for action in Sudan in a letter to the UN Secretary General, the Chinese Ambassador to the UN responded that the Sudanese government must explain this. In June 2008, the Chinese government continued in this positive trajectory, as Hu Jintao pressed the Sudanese government to allow for peacekeepers in Darfur under the auspices of a UN African Mission in Darfur. China’s actions in the UNSC regarding Sudan were unprecedented for China in the UNSC, as China had never engaged a government to acquiesce in UNPKOs on its territory.

There were a number of reasons why China changed its opposition to international action in Darfur and ultimately voted for UNSC resolution 1769 in July 2007, which resulted in the creation of the UN African Mission in Darfur: 1) the violence was getting to the point where it was a potential threat to China’s economic involvement in Sudan; 2) the AU wanted relief to its troops with UNPKOs. If China resisted such AU request, it would not help AU-China ties; 3) in 2007, China signed oil contracts with Chad, and since Chad borders Sudan, stability was a concern for China with its oil interests in the region; and 4) China’s concern about its international image. The international condemnation that China received for its lack of positive actions on this issue was a concern for the Chinese government, and pushed China towards changing its actions for the better regarding Sudan.

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671 Holslag, 2008: 79.
672 Wu and Taylor, 2011: 146.
673 Holslag, 2008: 83.
674 Holslag, 2008: 74.
675 Holslag, 2008: 75.
676 Holslag, 2008: 75.
677 See Wu and Taylor, 2011: 146; Wu, 2010: 79.
Regarding this dimension of international criticism that China faced because of its hindering UN action in Sudan, the harm that was being done to China's international image by having a close relationship with the Sudanese government was not worth the cost for a non-threatening issue to CCP rule. With the case of Sudan, unlike the other three cases in this chapter, China changed its actions for the better because the threat to CCP rule was not present.

### Conclusion

This chapter has advanced the overall argument of this dissertation: the CCP acts on human rights according to the perceived domestic threat to its rule, which is adequately explained by rational choice’s emphasis that actors act to advance their preferences. With the four cases, we see how the Chinese government modified its actions in the case of Darfur because of the lack of potential threat to its rule. But in the other three cases, the perceived threat to CCP rule was too high to accommodate international calls for human rights. Generally speaking, the Chinese government seeks to advance its international image and goes to significant length to do so, such as all the efforts that have gone into the 2008 Beijing Games and the 2010 Shanghai Expo, establishing both Confucius Institutes and CCTV bureaus throughout the world, and donating foreign aid. Despite such attempts by the Chinese government to advance its international image on the one hand, it is clear that, on the other hand, there are circumstances in which the Chinese government calculates that resisting international pressure, and thus inflicting damage to its international

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678 Wu and Taylor, 2011: 146; see also Wu, 2010: 79, 94.
image, is a better option than adhering to such international calls for action, as the Chinese government’s reaction to the events in this chapter reveal. The efforts that the Chinese government exerted in trying to advance its position with Tibet in 2008, Xinjiang in 2009, and Liu Xiaobo in 2010 demonstrate how aggressive it is willing to be on issues that it views as threatening to CCP rule.

The four events presented here that illustrate this pattern were all significant events in which each event received ample international attention. With the case of Tibet in March 2008, the Chinese government’s staunch resistance to international pressure just a few months prior to the 2008 Beijing Games demonstrates the emphasis the Chinese government has on domestic politics (i.e. fear of potential threats to CCP rule) as opposed to international cooperation on human rights issues. Thus, if the Chinese government perceives that its actions may resolute in a threat to CCP rule, the Chinese government will strongly resist any international calls for human rights action.

In this chapter, we see significant variance with the Chinese government’s reaction to the events observed. With the cases of Tibet and Xinjiang, the Chinese government aimed to set up macro economic development in those areas, reflecting the view that economic development is the most important issue for calming all issues. This focus on economic development does not serve as a change from the past, as the Chinese government has been focused on economic development since the reform and opening. Simply spending more money on economic development in those provinces was viewed as the solution. But with the case of Darfur, we see much more of a departure from China’s previous focus on sovereignty regarding
Sudan. Thus, with the case of Sudan, China was willing to rethink or change its policies because of the absence of a threat to CCP rule.

This chapter of the dissertation has relevance for policy implications for both state and non-state actors aiming to exert international pressure on China to improve human rights. We should not expect to see any change on China's position regarding the issues in which it perceives a threat to CCP rule, and thus INGOs looking to name and shame China should be aware of this. But we should expect more cooperation on issues outside of China where there is not the threat to CCP rule. In other words, while rational choice adequately explains China’s actions regarding human rights, it does less well in explaining how China’s actions evolved with the case of Darfur, as we see more cooperation from the Chinese government.
Conclusion

Introduction

In this dissertation, I have used rational choice, with its emphasis on actors acting in a manner to advance their preferences, to argue that China acts on human rights in the UNGA according to perceived threat levels to CCP rule. I began this dissertation by examining the explanatory dimensions that have been used when focusing on China’s approach to human rights—Asian values; sovereignty; modernization theory; and international pressure. I critically evaluated each approach and theory’s strengths and weaknesses regarding China’s actions on human rights. Ultimately, all of the explanatory dimensions have shortcomings regarding China’s actions on human rights. Therefore, there is a need to look beyond those four-mentioned approaches, which brings me to my argument of the perceived threat level to CCP rule based on rational choice.

Explaining why the four approaches do not hold

The four explanatory dimensions examined in this dissertation are not sufficient in explaining China’s actions on human rights in the UNGA. State and non-state actors have used international pressure (both economic sanctions and naming and shaming) with the intended aim of having China modify its actions on human rights issues. Those two mechanisms of applying international pressure have not resulted in China significantly modifying its actions on domestic human rights issues. Thus, the two have not been effective in bringing about change in China regarding human rights. Sanctions proved ineffective in the case of China in 1989
and the early 1990s due to the interest of many countries to trade with a robust Chinese economy. Naming and shaming has not been effective in China modifying its actions on human rights because the perceived threat to CCP rule is far more significant to the CCP than accommodating international calls for human rights. If the Chinese government were to acquiesce in international pressure on issues such as Tibet, Xinjiang, and Liu Xiaobo, the Chinese government perceives that as threatening to the very existence of the CCP. However, if the naming and shaming is for an issue or area that is not perceived as threatening to CCP rule, such as China’s actions in Sudan, then the Chinese government is more inclined to slightly modify its actions if such modification is not threatening to CCP rule, which I pointed out in chapter seven. Overall, because naming and shaming China has been ineffective in promoting human rights in China, it is of limited value in assessing China’s actions on human rights in the UNGA.

The Asian values argument has also been used to explain China’s approach to human rights. According to the Asian values argument, countries should respect other countries sovereignty. However, as I observed above with China’s statements that delegates issued in the UNGA and with China’s voting in the UNGA, the Chinese government has been willing to admonish the US and other Western countries on human rights. Thus, the Asian values argument also does not adequately explain China’s approach to human rights in the UNGA. While the Asian values argument does a good job in explaining China’s prioritizing economic development over political development, overall, however, the Asian values argument is of limited value in understanding China’s actions on human rights in the UNGA.
Since modernization theory argues that as the economy develops, political development (i.e. an improvement in human rights) follows, there should be evidence of this in China, as China has experienced tremendous economic development in recent decades. However, with the chart that I provided in the literature review section of this dissertation, we see how the massive increase in per capita GDP in China has not translated into an improvement in physical integrity rights (torture, extrajudicial killing, and political imprisonment). In China, per capita GDP increased sharply starting in 2005. However, it has been paralleled with a decrease—not an increase—in physical integrity rights. In contrast to the data that I presented on China’s dramatic per capita GDP growth in recent years, both GDP growth and democracy are considered in the literature as significant for improving human rights. Moreover, regarding modernization theory, it has been the underdeveloped rural areas that have had elections—not the more advanced coastal, urban areas.

The Chinese government has long-argued that issues occurring inside of China, especially human rights issues, are sovereign issues and thus the responsibility of the Chinese government—not of other states or transnational actors. However, the Chinese government has not been consistent regarding its stance and actions on sovereignty. Due to such inconsistencies by the Chinese government, sovereignty also does not fully explain why China acts in the UNGA on human rights issues. If China did respect sovereignty, as it says it does, it would have abstained on all of the UNGA votes that are country specific. In short, if the Chinese government were consistent about its stance on sovereignty, it would not
have voted in the affirmative on the UNGA country specific resolutions in which Israel, the UK, and Portugal were denounced on such human rights cases. Instead, the Chinese government decided to vote in the affirmative on such resolutions, and in the process, voted to denounce Western countries and supported the governments of developing countries. Moreover, if China did respect sovereignty, China would not have issued such statements critical of the US on human rights in the UNGA.

Yet another example that demonstrates how China does not act consistently on sovereignty is with the Chinese government’s restructuring of its domestic economy according to WTO and international trade regime requirements. In short, regarding participation in the international trade regime, we see China acquiescing on sovereignty issues. However, on human rights issues involving sovereignty, we see adamant resistance to changing domestic policies on human rights. In other words, regarding sovereignty, there are some instances in which China is more willing to work with international actors and standards and less willing in other cases. Regarding human rights issues involving political and civil rights within China, there is significantly less likely a chance that the Chinese government will initiate change because of the reasons stated in this dissertation: It is perceived as a threat to CCP rule. In short, the sovereignty argument is of limited value in understanding the research question of this dissertation.

Summary of the main findings
Each main chapter in this dissertation (chapters 5, 6, and 7) has evaluated the relationship between the domestic threat level and the CCP’s actions on human rights. This dissertation has examined China's voting patterns in the UNGA on human rights issues (in chapters 5 and 6); its statements in the UNGA on human rights issues (also in chapters 5 and 6); and its actions it has take in the UN on a specific case (Darfur in chapter 7) to reveal the argument of this dissertation: using rational choice, I argue that it is the perceived potential threat to the CCP impacts the way the CCP 1) votes in the UNGA on human rights resolutions; 2) offers statements in the UNGA on human rights issues; and 3) acts both in the UN and domestically on human rights. In chapters 5 and 6, I demonstrated how the Chinese government modifies its actions on human rights to avoid being called out by its fellow NAM countries. China consistently voted to shield the governments of the NAM countries if a given NAM country was targeted for human rights abuses. Such solidarity with NAM countries is designed to prevent China from being the target of similar resolutions that criticize the PRC on human rights, and thus the goal is to avoid potential threats to CCP rule. However, the Chinese government has been consistent in both 1) voting to criticize the human rights practices of developed or advanced countries, and 2) with its statements in the UN on human rights that are critical of the US and the West.

In chapters 5 and 6, I demonstrated how, when examining the percentage of UNGA resolutions that contain a human rights component, China has consistently voted in the affirmative on such UNGA resolutions. From 1971, which was the year China joined the UN, until 2012, China voted in the affirmative for the vast majority
(79 percent) of human rights resolutions in the UNGA. When I examined the resolutions, it was clear why China has such a voting record: China has consistently voted with the governments of developing countries in the UNGA. In other words, if a human rights resolution is either favorable for the government of a developing country or if the resolution criticizes a developed country because of its actions in a developing country, China votes in the affirmative on such resolutions. This pattern is observed by China’s voting behavior and how it modifies its voting in the UNGA according to the perceived domestic threat level to the CCP. I have argued that China has done so not to be a champion of human rights in the UNGA, but rather to advance its own interests and to prevent any potential threat to CCP rule. In this dissertation, I have revealed how, based on both the quantitative and qualitative analysis in chapter six regarding China’s voting on country specific resolutions and its statements, it is not accurate to argue that China is opposed to country specific resolutions, as China has voted in the affirmative on many country specific resolutions.

With the case studies that I examined in chapter 7, we see how the Chinese government is very concerned about any potential threat to its existence. This was manifested with the cases of Tibet in 2008, Xinjiang in 2009, and Liu Xiaobo in 2010. Also, it was manifested with how the Chinese government calculated that ultimately such staunch support for Sudan was not worth it, as Sudan was not on the same level of threat to CCP rule as the other case studies in that chapter. Chapter seven focused on four significant events in which China received ample international criticism regarding its human rights practice or its actions in hindering human
rights progress in the UN in another country (Sudan). For these four events, international actors carried out naming and shaming campaigns to change Chinese government behavior on the human rights issues. Regarding the three domestic cases, such naming and shaming campaigns were utterly ineffective in bringing about any positive change for human rights, which fits neatly with the argument advanced in this dissertation.

In chapter seven, I argued that the Chinese government’s perceived threat to CCP rule determined the way it reacted to calls for improved human rights in the cases examined here, with its fears of Xinjiang and Tibet becoming independent, and with the end of CCP rule, with the case of Liu Xiaobo. Thus, under these conditions (the threat of losing territory or the threat to CCP rule), we can expect the Chinese government to act in a way that is all about survival for the CCP. Regarding Darfur, while China was not involved in the genocide carried out there that clearly violated the human rights of the non-Arab population in Darfur, the Chinese government’s lack of willingness to take action in the UNSC early on has been regarded as China’s acquiescence in massive human rights violations in Darfur. In late 2007, China applied pressure to the Sudanese government to allow UN peacekeepers and China did not veto UNSC resolutions on Sudan. Having said that regarding Chinese government pressuring the Sudanese government, the Chinese government never pressured its own companies operating in Sudan to pull out of the country.

In this dissertation, I examined IR theories and approaches and their relevance for my focus. Realism (with its many different types of realist thinking), liberalism, constructivism, and rational choice (as pointed out earlier rational choice
is often associated with defensive realism\textsuperscript{679}) have all been used to explain China’s actions in IR. In this dissertation, I have used rational choice to argue that regarding the human rights issues explored here, China operates based on what it perceives as the threat level to its existence. In other words, the Chinese government makes calculated decisions or engages in cost-benefit analysis with both its actions to advance its preferences on human rights in the UNGA and with the case studies explored in this dissertation.

Among all of the theories and approaches that I have examined in this dissertation (the four main approaches that have been used to explain China’s approach to human rights: Asian values; sovereignty; modernization theory; and international pressure; and IR theories), I have argued that rational choice is the approach that most adequately explains China’s actions. As has been argued throughout this dissertation, the Chinese government has acted to advance its preferences in the UNGA based on what it perceives at domestic threat level to its rule.

By acting rationally, I have argued, in according with the literature,\textsuperscript{680} that Chinese government officials are acting in a manner that advances their objectives on human rights, which are to remain in power and prevent any potential threats to CCP rule. Therefore, the term rational depends on the objectives of the state, which means that the term cannot be used in an objective manner. However, I would not argue that rational choice completely explains Chinese IR overall. In contrast to its

\textsuperscript{679} Indeed, there are parallels between rational choice and realism, as Glaser acknowledges in his book, 2010. Glaser argued that rational choice tends to draw from defensive realism (2015:53)

\textsuperscript{680} See Quackenbush, 2004: 95.
usefulness in explaining China’s approach to human rights issues examined in this dissertation, rational choice does less well in explaining China’s interest in advancing such soft power initiatives as Confucius Institutes throughout the world and the massive amount the government spent on mega events such as the 2008 Olympic Games and the 2010 Shanghai Expo. As I pointed out before, the Chinese government’s interest in developing its soft power is not associated with rational choice’s emphasis on actors acting to advance their preferences. Also, we see much more cooperation from China on certain issues (nuclear non-proliferation, financial regulation, and the use of force) than the human rights issues focused on in this dissertation in which the Chinese government perceives a threat to its rule.

Regarding constructivism, while the Chinese government has been using human rights language and signing international human rights instruments, it has not become rhetorically entrapped. Even though the Chinese government inserted the phrase “human rights” into the 2004 Constitution, it has not resulted in any significant damages or pro-human rights changes. Thus, we have not, as of the time of this dissertation, witnessed China implementing change because of the words or language it has used regarding political and civil rights. Nonetheless, constructivism is useful for other non-human rights topics in Chinese IR. While other non-human rights cases suggest that China is learning from its engagement with IOs,\textsuperscript{681} in the realm of human rights actions, it does not appear that case at all.

I largely agree with Alastair Iain Johnston’s assessment of Chinese IR. Johnston, a leading China scholar and who has perhaps made the strongest case for

\textsuperscript{681} See Johnston, 2008.
constructivism in several cases on Chinese IR in his 2008 book *Social States*, makes the point that on issues of international significance, the Chinese government made calculations, or cost-benefit analysis, as to what would be better thing to do overall. For example, the Chinese government ponders whether or not is should go along with a treaty or reject it.\(^{682}\) Based on my examination of China’s voting in the UNGA, its statements issues in the UN, and with the case studies, I reached the conclusion that the Chinese government engages in calculations and cost-benefit analysis decisions on 1) whether or not is should vote for such human rights resolutions; 2) its statements in the UNGA on human rights; and 3) the reaction to events inside of China on human rights. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, the Chinese government has acted in the UNGA both based on its preferences and according to what it perceives at domestic threat level to its rule. Even though Johnston’s book is largely a constructivist account, I would argue that the above points that Johnston makes also fit neatly with the rational choice argument that I have made throughout this dissertation.

In short, different IR theories and approaches, including rational choice, cannot explain all of China’s actions in IR, as some can explain some aspects well but not other aspects. Indeed, Chinese IR is complex and certain IR theories and approaches offer better explanations in certain circumstances than others regarding Chinese IR. Overall, however, regarding China’s actions on human rights examined in this dissertation, I have argued that rational choice’s emphasis on actors acting to advance their preferences is the best approach to explain that. On the topic of the

\(^{682}\) 2008: 150.
Chinese government acting in a manner to remain in power, certain trends are occurring under Xi Jinping’s leadership that reinforce my argument. Therefore, even though my focus in this dissertation ends in the year 2012, the main trend that I explore in the dissertation (i.e. the CCP acts in a calculated manner to remain in power) is still occurring under Xi and appears to continue, as the interviews that Johnson conducted with dissidents during the Xi era demonstrate. In short, the crackdown on civil society in China under Xi reinforces my argument that the CCP is adamant about remaining in power and acts accordingly.

My methodological approach adds value to the literature on the topic of China’s approach to human rights. No other scholar has examined the way China has voted on human rights resolutions in the UNGA. In addition, I created a dataset on the topic of human rights resolutions from 1971 to 2012. While I have pointed out earlier that interviews would have certainly added more value to the dissertation, the lack of such interviews still does not detract from the main contribution of this dissertation. In the years to come, I intend to build on my findings in this dissertation by conducting such interviews. In the years to come, I will aim to attain interviews with Chinese delegates to the UN, human rights NGOs, and interviews and surveys in China with PRC citizens from a number of professions to further research this topic of China’s voting in the UNGA on human rights. In

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683 In chapter four, I devoted ample space to the interview findings that Johnson conducted with various PRC dissidents.

short, as pointed out above, this dissertation has much relevance for IR approaches and theories. Because my argument identifies when China will and will not modify its action on human rights, this dissertation has policy implications. As such, this dissertation is relevant for both state and non-state actors, such as transnational activists, members of IOs, and INGOs in their interactions with China.
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