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國際學碩士學位論文

**Delegitimizing U.S. Hegemony:  
China's challenge to U.S. legitimacy in  
G20 Summits and Copenhagen Climate Change  
Conference in 2009**

미패권의 정통성 흠집내기:

2009년 G20 정상회의와 코펜하겐 기후변화회의에서  
미국에 대한 중국의 비정통화 시도에 관한 연구

2014年 2月

서울대학교 國際大學院  
國際學科 國際協力 專攻  
權 智 榮

**Delegitimizing U.S. Hegemony:  
China's challenge to U.S. legitimacy in  
G20 Summits and Copenhagen Climate Change  
Conference in 2009**

Thesis by

**Jiyoung Kwon**

Graduate Program in International Cooperation  
For the degree of Masters of International Studies

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**Graduate School of International Studies  
Seoul National University**

**Seoul, Korea**

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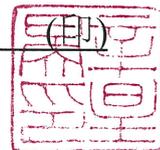
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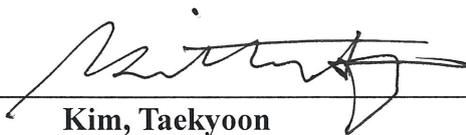
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## **Abstract**

**Delegitimizing U.S. Hegemony:  
China's challenge to U.S. legitimacy in  
G20 Summits and Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in 2009**

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The relative distribution of power in today's international system is shifting from one of unipolarity. The shift has not yet been significant enough to allow balance of power, or a coalition of states led by China against the United States, but has been large enough to raise demands for an alternative order. In this setting, how can we conceptually locate the current stage of competition between China and the United States? What framework other than power can best capture the behavior of China?

This thesis answers this question by adopting delegitimation as an analytical framework to explain China's behavior against the United States and the international order created under U.S. influence. Legitimacy and delegitimation have not been researched extensively thus far because of an overwhelming tendency towards adopting a power framework. There is no synthesized work on the concept of delegitimation, and the idea has not been operationalized to be applied in analyzing any nation's behavior.

To fill in these gaps, this thesis adopts delegitimation as one phase in Modelski's long cycle model as an analytical framework to operationalize the concept of delegitimation and apply it to recent behaviors exhibited by China, focusing on the G20 Summits and the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference (COP15) in 2009 as case studies.

The results of the study are as follows. First, China's behavior has delegitimated the United States and the U.S.-dominated order in the G20 Summits and the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. Second, the degree of delegitimation in the two areas were different; delegitimation was strong at the G20 Summits and weaker at the Copenhagen Conference. These results offer intriguing implications on the pattern of China's delegitimation in terms of occurrence and degree, as can be seen through the temporal significance of the year 2009 and sectoral differences in occurrence and degree of delegitimation.

The results of this study contribute to the growing body of research on the U.S.-China relationship, which has been mainly examined within the frameworks of power transition or balance of power. Analyzing China's behavior through the framework of legitimacy and delegitimation allows a reinterpretation of China's apparent inaction and non-events in the currently shifting international order into action and events.

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**Keywords:** Delegitimation, China, U.S.-China relations, G20 Summits, Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, 2009

**Student ID:** 2011-23960

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **1. Research Background**

Classical realists and neorealists agree that balancing occurs when the balance of power in a system is threatened. Kenneth Waltz makes a strong argument about the automatic nature of balancing, saying that “From the theory, one expects a strong tendency toward balance in the system. The expectation is not that of balance, once achieved, will be maintained, but that a balance, once disrupted, will be restored in one way or another.”<sup>1</sup> Today there is an anomaly in this process - the absence of any balancing against the dominance of the United States after the collapse of the Soviet Union - that has sparked debate among international relations circles. China’s rapid rise in recent years has made it a possible contender against the United States, but many argue that even with China there are no attempts at balancing in the current international system.

Many scholars have tried to understand this anomaly by examining the distinctive characteristics of unipolarity or by exploring non-traditional methods of balancing such as balance of threats or soft balancing. Some scholars even argue that the

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 128.

exceptional preponderance of the United States has reached such a threshold that it has become impossible for other states to balance against it. Other scholars explain the absence of balancing as stemming from the benign character of the United States, which is not perceived as threats to other states, or that there is soft, or tacit, balancing in action in the form of informal alliances against the United States.

If the unique form of unipolarity established by the United States is so strong as to preclude any act of balancing, it would be meaningless to analyze China as a challenger against the U.S. With the balance of power framework, China is often described as doing “nothing” in terms of balancing, or at most pursuing internal buildup of its military capabilities based on its fast economic growth. Although internal buildup of military capabilities and the growth of economic and industrial foundations for military strength can be seen as a form of balancing known as internal balancing, this framework cannot explain China’s behavior in 2009, when scholars were noting the relative decline of the U.S. It is hard to believe that China, the most rapidly rising great power, would stand idly by while the gap between its power and that of the U.S. is narrowing. Robert Gilpin argues that the newly gained power of rising states is the driving force of international systemic change, as these states demand changes in the system that reflect their newly gained power and unmet interests.<sup>2</sup> On this premise, it

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 33.

would be reasonable to believe that China is indeed doing “something,” and that the relevant events are ongoing.

How can we conceptually locate the current stage of the competition between China and the United States? What framework other than power can best capture the behavior of China? Henry Kissinger offers some insight on this question. He suggests legitimacy and balance of power as the two necessary conditions for maintaining international order. Kissinger says, “To have stability, an international system must have two components: a balance of power and a generally accepted principle of legitimacy. A balance of power makes the overthrow of international order physically difficult, deterring a challenge before it occurs. A broadly based principle of legitimacy produces reluctance to assault the international order. A stable peace testifies to a combination of physical and moral restraints.”<sup>3</sup> Legitimacy is expected to offer some insight in the era when balance of power is physically restrained. Therefore, understanding China’s behavior as balancing, not to material power but to another aspect of the power of the United States, can be the key to solving the puzzle. Analyzing China’s attempts to undermine the non-material aspect of power, which is legitimacy of the United States and its dominated order, can be a useful framework to capture China’s current behavior.

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<sup>3</sup> Henry Kissinger, “War Roared into Vacuum Formed By a Sidestepping of Statesmanship,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 27, 1989, Accessed November 15, 2013. [http://articles.latimes.com/1989-08-27/opinion/op-1559\\_1\\_eastern-europe](http://articles.latimes.com/1989-08-27/opinion/op-1559_1_eastern-europe)

## 2. Literature Review

Delegitimation, which is the analytical framework of this research, is understudied in the context of international relations partly due to the concept's ambiguity. Studies on delegitimation have two weaknesses. One is that there is no synthesized work on the concept of delegitimation. Delegitimation has not been fully operationalized to be applied in analyzing a certain nation's behavior. The other is that delegitimation has not been extensively studied in the context of the current U.S.-China rivalry.

It is Modelski who studied delegitimation as one of phases in the long cycle model. Since he suggests this concept as a part of the systemic cycle, the idea of delegitimation is fragmented in his works with other phases. Furthermore, as of 1987, he concluded that the delegitimation phase already began with the Soviet Union as the main challenger to the system. Since the background of his studies is the Cold War, it is needed to reconstruct his idea on delegitimation in the context of U.S. unipolarity and the U.S.-China rivalry in the post-Cold War era, when U.S. unipolarity is still valid and China is rising to a potential challenger to U.S. hegemony.

Those who studied delegitimation in the context of unipolarity and the US-China rivalry is Randall Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu in *After Unipolarity: China's Vision of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline*. They suggest delegitimation as an indispensable and preliminary step for a rising state before balancing against a

hegemonic power. As an ideational paper, however, they simply say that the current international system has entered the delegitimation phase without providing concrete evidence or criteria under which certain behaviors of China can be categorized as delegitimation. Any argument on China's delegitimation efforts actually being made at this moment should be empirically examined and technically proved, because delegitimation is not simply equal to opposition to a hegemon. Therefore, it is required to fill in the gaps by conceptualizing the concept of delegitimation and apply it to the current Sino-U.S. relations.

### **3. Research Question**

The research questions in this study are:

Q (1): What is delegitimation?

Q (2): Has China's delegitimation begun?

It is important to conceptualize delegitimation in the context of U.S.-China rivalry, by synthesizing relevant studies and extracting the components of delegitimation, which give criteria in judging the occurrence and degree of delegitimation. It is also important to apply the concept as an analytical framework to current U.S.-China relations. To see whether China is actually delegitimizing U.S. hegemony has significant

implications for the prospect for U.S.-China power transition, given delegitimation's precipitating role in the systemic change. This study will be laid out as follows. In Chapter Two, it will try to conceptualize delegitimation as the analytical framework of this research. To see whether delegitimation is the appropriate framework to be applied in great power relations, it will be preceded by examining legitimacy as a valid object of analysis. Delegitimation will be conceptualized mainly with Modelski's understanding on it, for his work pioneers the development of the concept. In Chapter Three, a case study will be carried out to see whether China is actually delegitimizing the U.S. and its dominated order. China's behavior in G20 Summits and Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in 2009 will be examined. Chapter Four will offer conclusions.

## II. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

### 1. Legitimacy as a Proper Object of Analysis

#### 1.1 Legitimacy matters

Since material aspect of power has been the most important factor of analysis in international relations (IR), the importance of non-material aspect of power has been underestimated. Morgenthau rightfully points out “predominant theoretical and practical concern with the material aspect of power made the subtle and intangible relationships such as the policy of prestige neglected.”<sup>4</sup> However, material power per se is sometimes not sufficient enough to understand a political outcome and behavior of an individual or a nation.

Given Robert Dahl’s definition of power, which is the ability of A to get B to do something he or she would otherwise not do, legitimacy also is power in non-material form in a sense that it can make an individual or a nation to do otherwise they would not do. However, legitimacy is hard to be comprehended in the context of international affairs. Borrowed from the Morgenthau’s explanation for why the policy of prestige has

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<sup>4</sup> H. J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The struggle for power and peace* (AA Knopf, 1960), 86.

rarely been recognized in political literatures, the reason for difficulties to conceptualize legitimacy can be listed as follows. Firstly, legitimacy is subtle and intangible. It is hard to prove that there exists legitimacy working in the international politics and a certain behavior of a nation comes out of accepting or refusing legitimacy of the order or other states. Ian Hurd also finds the ignorance on the workings of legitimacy in IR from reasons of epistemology or methodology.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, unlike the maintenance and acquisition of power, legitimacy is rarely an end in itself. Therefore, power has been regarded as a more appropriate object in explaining states behavior in IR. Moreover, unlike domestic politics where deficiency of legitimacy of a monarchy or a regime has been critical drive behind attempts to overthrow of it, there has been widespread belief that any systemic and behavioral changes in IR driven by excess or lack of power rather than deficiency in legitimacy of the system is the main drive. For these reasons, legitimacy has been understudied in IR, but that does not mean it is invalid candidate in IR.

a. In comparison with authority and status

There are seemingly similar non-material currency of power, which are authority and status. They resembles legitimacy in that all of them are a sort of power in that they have abilities that influence political outcomes or compliance/noncompliance of other nations, but in a subtle and intangible form, thus non-material aspect of power.

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<sup>5</sup> Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics," *International Organization* 53(02), (1999): 380

According to David Lake, “Status is a claim by major powers and a recognition by ordinary states of the special roles and influence of a limited number of key states with the ability to project coercive force over greater than normal distances,” while “authority is a claim by dominant states and a recognition by subordinate states that the former have the legitimate right to issue certain limited commands.”<sup>6</sup> While status is a club good that can be held equally by some number of states, like major power status or nuclear power status, authority is held by one state or a supranational body but rarely by two actors at the same time. Authority has the zero-sum or exclusive nature.

Authority is a parallel concept with legitimacy. According to David Lake, “authority is rightful or legitimate rule,”<sup>7</sup> or “authority is legitimate power.”<sup>8</sup> Considering that legitimacy is also one form of power, we have every reason to understand legitimacy in parallel with authority. Ian Hurd mentions the Max Weber’s understanding of authority, or *Herrschaft*, as the condition in which power is married to legitimacy, adding his comment that “the phrase legitimate authority is, strictly speaking, redundant.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> David Lake, “Authority, Status, and the End of the American Century, prepared for the Conference on Beyond American Hegemony: Rising Powers, Status and the World Order,” a draft presented at Dickey Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, October 22-23, 2010, 2. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://weber.ucsd.edu/~dlake/documents/LakeStatusandAuthoritypaper.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> David Lake, *Hierarchy in international relations* (Cornell University Press, 2009a), 17.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Ian Hurd, 400.

Among them, legitimacy is the most proper object to be analyzed for understanding the current behavior of China and its relationship with the United States, for two reasons. First, since the current international system can be defined as unipolarity structurally but hegemony when consider the ideational aspect of the system. Legitimacy is a proper concept to analyze hegemony in a sense that it is more keenly related to the key component of hegemony, which is the ‘consent of the governed.’ Second, such unipolarity and hegemony entails in and of itself zero-sum characteristics in great power relations. In this regard, Gilpin rightfully captures the importance of legitimacy in the system where a hegemon hold its hegemony, by saying “To some extent the lesser states in an international system follow the leadership of more powerful states, in part because they accept legitimacy and utility of the existing order.”<sup>10</sup> In this sense, Legitimacy along with authority is more valid object of analysis in understanding China’s behavior under US unipolarity.

#### b. Characteristics of legitimacy

There are several definition of legitimacy used by IR scholars and pundits. Ian Hurd defines legitimacy as the “normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed.”<sup>11</sup> Suchman offers a general definition, that is, “Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper,

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<sup>10</sup> Gilpin, 30.

<sup>11</sup> Ian Hurd, 381.

or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions.”<sup>12</sup> Nossel’s definition is “international legitimacy is a measure of the acceptability and justifiability of a state’s actions in the eyes of other states and their citizens.” By examining various definitions, common characteristics of legitimacy can be extracted.

### Characteristic 1: Relational

Legitimacy is relational in a sense that the relevant attributes of states enjoying legitimacy are defined only in comparison with other states.<sup>13</sup> Rapkin and Braaten mention the ‘Janus-faced denotation of legitimacy,’ showing that legitimacy refers to a kind of social relationship between those claiming it and those conferring it.<sup>14</sup> One face denotes as referents comprising both who seek legitimation and ideas, ideologies, norms, rules, policies or actions which legitimacy is claimed by actors. The other face denotes those who bestow it.

David Lake divides authority into formal-legal authority and relational authority based on whether its primary foundation is law or a social contract.<sup>15</sup> Lake emphasizes “relational authority locates legitimacy in a social contract between a rule,

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<sup>12</sup> Mark Suchman, “Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches,” *Academy of management review*, 20(3) (1995): 575.

<sup>13</sup> David Lake (2010), 4.

<sup>14</sup> David P. Rapkin and Dan Braaten, “Conceptualising hegemonic legitimacy,” *Review of International Studies*, 35(1) (2009): 117.

<sup>15</sup> David Lake (2010), 7.

who provides a social order of value to the ruled, and the ruled, who comply with the ruler's commands necessary to the production of that order."<sup>16</sup> From the perspective of relational legitimacy, conferral of legitimacy by the ruled is conditional in a sense that it is bestowed as long as rulers can fulfill their part of the social contract. In this way, relational authority is contingent on the actions of both the ruler and ruled.<sup>17</sup>

### Characteristic 2: Intersubjective

Legitimacy is *intersubjective* in that the relational attributes of states derive from a shared understanding of those attributes.<sup>18</sup> Attributes are neither possessed by an actor nor rest on self-proclaimed assertions of dominance or rights, but gain meaning and effect only from their mutual recognition.<sup>19</sup> Legitimacy is a matter of perceptions or beliefs of one actor about another.

### Characteristic 3: Political Capital in a Stock

Legitimacy is a kind of political capital that hegemons build up over time and then can be drawn upon through a series of unpopular actions that others might regard

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<sup>16</sup> David Lake, "Relational Authority and Legitimacy in International Relations," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53(3) (2009b), 332.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 334.

<sup>18</sup> David Lake (2010) 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

as illegitimate.<sup>20</sup> In this regard, legitimacy can be said as a stock that can be conserved, expended or depleted.

#### Characteristic 4: Matter of Extent

Beetham said, “Legitimacy is not an all or nothing affair...it may be eroded, contested or incomplete; and judgments about it are usually judgments of degree, rather than all or nothing.”<sup>21</sup> Lake also admits that authority is not a constant, but a variable that exists in greater or lesser degree in different times and places.<sup>22</sup> Legitimacy is a matter of extent rather than of all or nothing. Thus, Legitimacy can be eroded, contested, or incomplete.

#### Character 5: Zero-sum attributes

Like authority which is the parallel concept to legitimacy, legitimacy is strictly zero sum or exclusive. In relations between states in any given issue area, legitimate power is ultimately located in a single “ultimate” authority.<sup>23</sup> And as states compete for authority, the potential for conflict is much greater.

In sum, from these characteristics of legitimacy, we can conceptualize legitimacy as follows. Firstly, it is a relational concept. There are actors who claim

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<sup>20</sup> David Rapkin and Dan Braaten, 134.

<sup>21</sup> Beetham, *The legitimation of power* (Londres, McMillan: 1991), 19-20.

<sup>22</sup> David Lake (2009a), 20.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

legitimacy and who confer it. Legitimacy exists in relations with other states. When a dominant state's legitimacy reduces, it is not that it loses legitimacy but it is withdrawn by other lesser states. Secondly, it is as much about perceptions as it is a legal concept. Therefore, as the hegemon which enjoys legitimacy in one day can lose in another day when lesser states perceive its being or order as illegitimate, even when its material capabilities remains the same. Third, it is a kind of political capital in a stock that a hegemon builds up and holds. It can be conserved, expended or depleted. Fourth, it is a matter of extent rather than of all or nothing. Legitimacy can be eroded, contested or incomplete. Lastly, it has a zero-sum attribute. As states compete for legitimacy, the potential for conflict is much greater. From these characteristics, we can draw an implication that legitimacy is, like power, the proper object of competition between a hegemon and a would-be hegemon.

As legitimation or attempts to enhance legitimacy happens, so can delegitimation or attempts to undermine legitimacy. That is why legitimation and delegitimation are important especially in the era of U.S.-China rivalry. Legitimacy matters especially under the current US unipolarity. Robert Kagan argues that the struggle over legitimacy comes after the demise of the Cold War. Kagan says, "When the Cold War ended, the pillars of U.S. legitimacy collapsed along with the Berlin Wall and Lenin's statues."<sup>24</sup> In this regard, Kagan stresses America's crisis of legitimacy is a sort of "the unipolar predicament," which refers to the situation where unprecedented

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<sup>24</sup> Kagan, America's Crisis of Legitimacy, *Foreign Affairs* 83(2) (Mar/Apr, 2004): 68.

US global power has become the issue at question in the post-Cold War era. Diminishing legitimacy in the post-Cold War era is genuinely structural in a sense that it is not the product of any specific US policy or of a particular US administration.

Robert Kagan rightfully captures the importance of legitimacy under unipolarity, saying “The struggle to define and obtain international legitimacy in this new era may prove to be among the most critical contests of our time. In some ways, it is as significant in determining the future of the U.S. role in the international system as any purely material measure of power and influence.”<sup>25</sup> Martha Finnemore also points out the importance of legitimacy under unipolarity, saying “With material balancing options limited, one obvious opening for rival states is to undermine the legitimacy of unipolar world.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>26</sup> Martha Finnemore, “Legitimacy, hypocrisy, and the social structure of unipolarity: why being a unipole isn't all it's cracked up to be,” *World Politics* 61(1) (2009): 66.

## 2. Conceptualization of Delegitimation

### 2.1 Delegitimation under Unipolarity

According to the Oxford Dictionary, delegitimizing is to withdraw legitimate status or authority from a certain object.<sup>27</sup> Lexically, it can be understood as a behavior or an attempt to negate legitimacy of a certain object. Delegitimation can be said to be a process or behavior to make the behavior or situation that has been perceived as “natural” and “inevitable,” “unnatural” or “unfair”.<sup>28</sup>

Delegitimation is important especially for hegemony. Clark argues, ‘hegemony is a contested political process, which consists of legitimation efforts by hegemonic actors claiming legitimacy for their behavior and may also be countered by delegitimation efforts to deny or undermine legitimacy claims.’<sup>29</sup> However, delegitimation is not so much popular as balancing which is directed toward power per se. Not directly targeting power of hegemon but its legitimacy, delegitimation can be distinguished from balancing. In this regard, delegitimation is rather similar to soft balancing in that both admit the current balance of power, without seeking to challenge

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<sup>27</sup> Oxford dictionary (accessed November 15, 2013); available from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/delegitimize>

<sup>28</sup> Walt, *Taming American Power: The global response to U.S. Primacy* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2005)

<sup>29</sup> David P. Rapkin and Dan Braaten, 120.

US power directly by forming countervailing coalition.<sup>30</sup> Both delegitimation and soft balancing seek to put constraints on the behavior of hegemon by affecting the mechanism of how hegemon's power is operationalized. Delegitimation is more fundamental in restraining the behavior or option of hegemon than soft balancing because it targets permissive international environment where US power and its operation is seen legitimate.<sup>31</sup>

As Stephen Walt argues, delegitimation is available as a strategy of opposition that a weaker state can adopt without directly challenging the US power. Delegitimation efforts are useful especially under unipolarity because balancing power per se is strictly restricted due to the very nature of unipolarity. Randall Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu stresses the importance of delegitimation under unipolarity, saying "Unipolarity, (however), represents an unprecedented historical anomaly that makes delegitimation strategies more necessary and complex than ever before."<sup>32</sup>

*"Under unipolarity, balancing becomes the very definition of revisionism: the goal of restoring a global balance of power requires the overthrow of the existing unipolar structure. Hence, concentrated power within the unipole is not the only obstacle that states seeking a balance must overcome; they must also overcome the revisionist label attached to any state seeking to restore global equilibrium."*<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Walt, 161.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 179.

<sup>32</sup> Randall Schweller, Xiaoyu Yu, "After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline," *International Security* 36(1) (Summer 2011): 44.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

In bipolarity and multipolarity, balancing is the mechanism to restore the status quo. For example, during the Vienne System and the Cold War era, balancing behavior was a sort of stabilizer of the system. Under unipolarity, however, the situation is different. Balancing behavior is seen as destabilizing the status quo. Under unipolarity, any state pursuing balancing unipole's power would come under fierce criticism from other states benefitting the current stable order designed by the unipole. Therefore, a challenger emerging under unipolarity shoulders a dual burden to overcome the concentrated power per se and the revisionist stigma attached to itself. That is why Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu argue delegitimation, an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of hegemon short of hard balancing, as a preliminary and necessary step for emerging powers to take to pave the way for global contestation.

## 2.2 Delegitimation as One of Phases in the Long Cycle Model

### a. Phases in terms of supply and demand of leadership

In the Long Cycle Model suggested by Modelski, delegitimation is one of phases in the hegemonic cycle. For Modelski who identifies the property of the global system undergoing regular and periodic change, one cycle is composed of four phases, which are (1) global war, (2) world power, (3) delegitimation, and (4) deconcentration.<sup>34</sup> Each cycle begins with a condition of unipolarity at the end of each global war, and the

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<sup>34</sup> Modelski, *Exploring Long Cycles* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1987a), 4.

global system loses concentration as phases proceed. Modelski explains the motives or drive of this cyclical and periodic pattern of the global system with two reasons.<sup>35</sup> One reason is monopoly rents. The status of hegemon or world power enjoys “preferential access to, better knowledge of, and superior bargaining power in global transactions and communications and a capacity to ‘set the rules’ in the world affairs.”<sup>36</sup> These monopoly rents inevitably attract rivalry and competition. That’s why each world power faces the necessity of confronting other great powers willing and ready to reach out for global status. The other reason is that the elements legitimizing monopoly in world arrangements have steadily declined, consequently the legitimacy of competition was rising even as the opportunities for monopoly were narrowing. Through these mechanism, the global system moves into bipolarity and multipolarity.

Four phases in the long cycle can be divided largely into two phases: the ascending phase and the descending phase. The ascending phase takes positive elements created by a global war, which are solidarity, coalition building, and sharing common goal. What is noteworthy in this model is the process in which ascending phase is gradually transformed into descending phase. According to Modelski, the point at which ascending phase turns into descending one is the emergence of so far unattended global problems. As global problems are posed by rising new leaders and competitors and

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 227-228.

<sup>36</sup> Modelski, “The Long Cycle of Global Politics and the Nation-State,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20(2) (April 1978): 227-228.

conflicts are generated that do not seem to yield to solutions, world power phase can be said to have already stepped into the next phase, delegitimation.

**Table 1. Phases in terms of Supply and Demand of Leadership**

<b>Cycle phase</b>	<b>Preference for order</b>	<b>Availability of order</b>
<b>(1) Global War</b>	High	Low
<b>(2) World Power</b>	High	High
<b>(3) Delegitimation</b>	Low	High
<b>(4) Deconcentration</b>	Low	Low

Source: Modelski, Long Cycles in World Politics (1987b), 31.

Based on two variables which are ‘preference for order’ (or demand for leadership) and ‘availability of order’ (or supply of leadership), Modelski can show the fluctuation of any given political system throughout phases. Phase (1) is Global war phase in which the preference for order reaches exceptional heights but is hard to meet given conditions of disorder created by intensive conflict. Modelski perceives global war as a resolution of the question at issue through a systemic decision and a major trial of strength. Once a systemic decision is made, phase (2) or World power is initiated. Because this order is the product of world leadership, this phase may be called that of world power. Order is achieved at a time when the preference for it are still high. However, as the experience of security erodes the high priority given to it, Delegitimation or phase (3) begins. Modelski explains accumulated experience of

security “inevitably produces situation where preference for order is lowered as preference for alternative social goods, such as wealth or knowledge, rises. When such lowered preference for order is developed to a decline in the supply of order, and the system reaches Deconcentration or phase (4). In this phase, both the availability of order as well as demand for it are at an all-time low, because the order is not supplied. Highly concentrated power in the phase (1) has changed into the lower degree of concentration in phase (4). And then the system restarts the phase (1) global war to resolve the question.

Seen as the phase (3) in the long cycle, delegitimation can be understood as a phase in which the preference of order started to reduce as preference for alternative social goods increases while availability of order is still high. Seen from the side of leadership, delegitimation can be said a phase in which the demand for leadership under world power phase decreases while the leadership is still capable of supplying order and carrying out its function.

#### b. Feedback Loop in the Long Cycle and delegitimation

In addition to perceiving the global system passing through the long cycle, Modelski also approaches the systemic cycle in terms of the functions that a world power plays. Each phase in the long cycle can also be interpreted in terms of the functions of leadership. Based on assumption that “leadership cannot be viewed solely or primarily as a display of power or a manifestation of superiority, but it must be seen more essentially as the accomplishment of essential services that give impetus and example to

the global polity and eventually to the entire world system,” Modelski suggests two feedback loops based on the two functions of leadership. One function is the control or regulation of power which recovers stability in the system, and the other function is the problem-solving mechanism which enables growth and change in the system through learning process.<sup>37</sup> The former function concerns regulatory loop while the latter concerns developmental loop. Each phase in both loops corresponds to each phase in the long cycle, since they are different sides of the same coin.

Since Modelski made his model on the assumption that global system change is more like non-linear process in which the system itself and its structure are changing as the cycle recurs,<sup>38</sup> four phases of long cycle go through feedback process. That is why the long cycle is the combination of negative and positive feedback loop and each phase of the long cycle can be seen in line with the corresponding stages in feedback loops.

#### *Delegitimation in the Regulatory (or Balance-of-Power) Loop*

In regulatory loop, main precipitator of the feedback is information input about the emergence of tension, ultimately leading to the question of order and stability of the system. It is negative feedback because the returning output decrease the amplitude of oscillations of a system and keeps such oscillations within limits. And that is why it is also described as the balance-of-power loop of the long cycle. It resembles balance of

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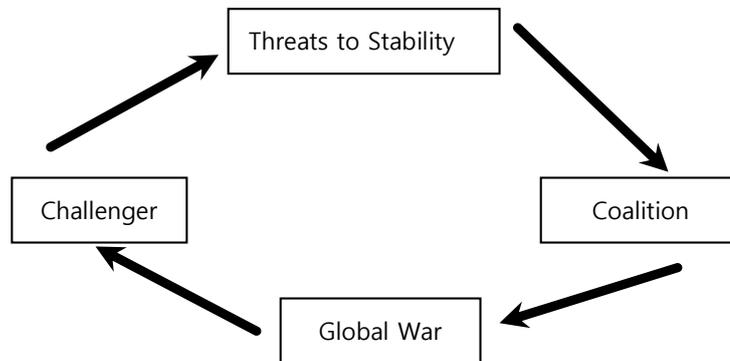
<sup>37</sup> Modelski, *Long Cycles in World Politics* (Seattle: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1987b), 29.

<sup>38</sup> Modelski (1987a), 119.

power mechanism which restores stability through negative feedback. The regulatory loop shows the process of power concentration and diffusion, which ultimately recovers stability in the system. The process in the regulatory loop is as follows:

- (a) A challenger to the status quo creates a systemic perception of threats (negative problems) that appear to destabilize international politics.
- (b) This information input, or the perception of a threat has operated as the cement that binds a variety of states, in forms of alliances or general coalitions.
- (c) General coalitions beget global wars.
- (d) Global wars produce new challengers.

**Figure 1. The Regulatory (or Balance-of-Power) Loop**



Source: Modelski, *Exploring Long Cycles* (1987a), 121.

Seen in line with the phases in the long cycle model, phase (a) or challenger phase in the regulatory loop corresponds to the delegitimation phase in the long cycle model. By paralleling delegitimation phase with the challenger phase in the regulatory loop, we can further deepen our understanding that challenger's role in inputting negative information or alerting systemic threat characterizes delegitimation phase. Given that the global system enters the delegitimation phase after world power phase when preference of order or demand for the current leadership erodes, it is quite reasonable to think the challenger's precipitating role in the delegitimation phase by inputting negative information or alerting systemic threats.

*Delegitimation in the developmental (or Evolutionary) loop*

The developmental loop grows and directs the processes of growth and evolution. As the returning output serves to increase the amplitude of the process, it is positive feedback.

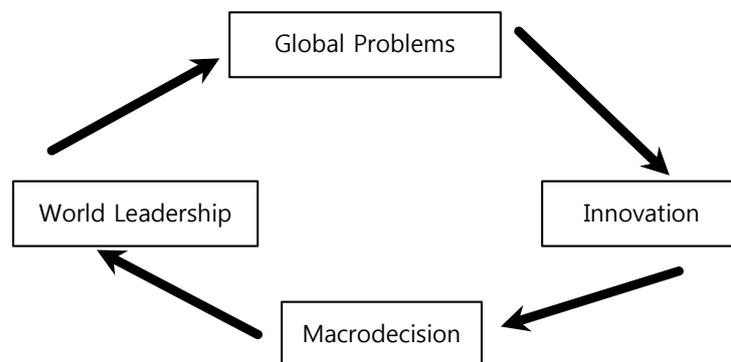
( i ) Global Leadership: The world power accomplishes the principal global tasks in the period following the global war.

( ii ) Clarification: As problems is laid out and defined with new information and a resetting agenda, learning takes place and innovation is introduced.

( iii ) Coalitioning: Innovators develop a counstituency and cultivate alignments with established social interests.

(iv) Macrodecision: It approves, ratifies, and then diffuses the innovation as legitimate for the entire global system and not just for one particular country.

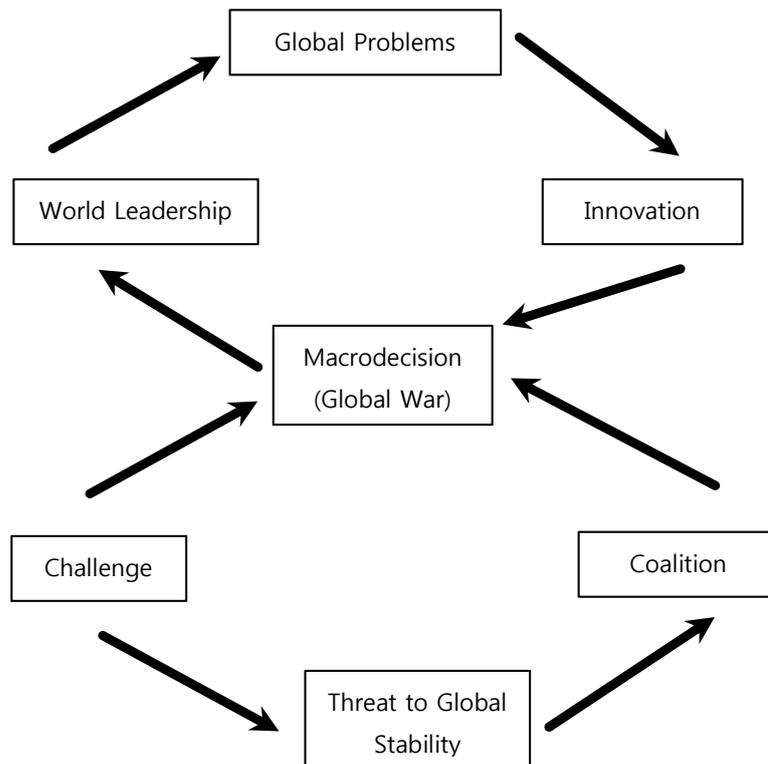
**Figure 2. The Developmental (or Evolutionary) Loop**



Source: Modelski, *Exploring Long Cycles* (1987a), 124.

Modelski explains stage (ii) Clarification in the developmental loop as the one “with new information, a clarification of the situation and a resetting of the agenda with active participation of the media.” Modelski pays attention to the phase of Clarification in which learning takes place and innovations are introduced as the problem is laid out and defined. Stage (iii) is the stage of Coalitioning, in which the “innovators develop a constituency and cultivate alignments with established social interests.” And the last stage (iv) is Macrodecision stage which approves, ratifies, and then diffuses the innovation as legitimate for the entire global system and not just for one particular country.

**Figure 3. The Regulatory and Developmental Loop**



Source: Modelski, *Exploring Long Cycles* (1987a), 125.

### 2.3 Elements and Characteristics of Delegitimation

Modelski defines the delegitimation as the decline of legitimacy of leadership. According to his model, delegitimation begins when the stability of world power phase, in which high demand for order or leadership is satisfied with high supply for order or leadership, begins destabilizing. Delegitimation phase is clearly distinguished from the

following deconcentration phase. Both phases are concerned with the descending phases in the long cycle where the erosion of global leadership proceeds, but both are distinct. Modelski puts, “Delegitimation is a decline in the demand for leadership and deconcentration is a drop in the supply of leadership.”<sup>39</sup> Deconcentration is preceded by the delegitimation phase. Deconcentration is a phase where the distribution of power is dispersed away from unipolarity because the global leadership loses its capability to provide such order or accomplish its leadership functions. Modelski lists the example of delegitimation such as two round of oil shocks, the OPEC crisis of 1973-1974, and Iranian revolution of 1979, when the demands for a new international economic order increases around the world.

Delegitimation phase can be understood in a multi-dimensional way, as can be seen in Table 2. In terms of supply/demand of leadership, the preference of order established by the world leader starts to reduce as preference for alternative social goods or order increases while the leadership is still capable of providing public goods and order. In terms of power stabilizing mechanism of the system, it is the phase where a challenger takes a precipitating role by inputting negative information or alerting systemic threats. Delegitimation phase corresponds to Global problem stage in regulatory loop. In terms of problem-solving mechanism of the system, delegitimation phase corresponds to the stage that carries out Clarification phase where a clarification of the situation is made with new information and the agenda is reset.

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<sup>39</sup> Modelski (1987a), 222.

**Table 2. Multi-Dimensions of Phases in the Long Cycle**

Long Cycle	Phases/Stages			
	Global war	World power	Delegitimation	Deconcentration
Preference for order	High	High	Low	Low
Availability of order	low	high	high	low
Power concentration	High	High	Low	Low
<b>Regulatory Loop</b>	Global Decision	World power	Global Problems	Coalition
Regulation of power recovering stability				
<b>Developmental Loop</b>	Macrodecision	Implementation	Clarification	Coalitioning
Problem-solving mechanism				

Source: Summed up by author

From the Modelski’s studies on delegitimation, we can extract elements of delegitimation. Delegitimation is composed of system- and state- level elements. Though Modelski did not divide those elements by different levels, we can divide them by levels. Decreasing demand for the existing order and dispersion of power can be categorized as system-level elements, while problematizing and agenda resetting as state-level ones. In case of analyzing a challenger’s behavior, state-level elements matter.

Elements of delegitimation from the side of a rival state are as follows:

- (1) Problematization of US dominance/US-dominated order: Clarification
- (2) Suggestion of the architecture for new order: Agenda-resetting

(1) Problematization of US dominance/US-dominated order is about the role taken by a

challenger or rival states to input negative information or alert other states of systemic threats. (2) Suggestion of architecture of the new order is about the rival state's role to clarify the situation with new information and setting the new agenda on the table.

Several characteristics of delegitimation can be suggested. Firstly, it is an outcome-related concept rather than intention related. As Walt's argument shows, it can be adopted as a strategy, deliberately adopted with an intention to undermine the US legitimacy. But understanding delegitimation solely in a strategic sense would be misleading because it also belongs to a part of systemic change. The fact that it is a part of the phases in the systemic cycle tells that same outcome can be produced even without any states intending to challenge the legitimacy of the United States.

Secondly, delegitimation can occur even when there is no change in the distribution of material capabilities. As can be seen from the developmental loop in the long cycle, delegitimation can be accelerated when the leadership is less capable of carrying out its functions.

Thirdly, if deficiency in leadership function and changes in distribution of capability occurs simultaneously, it is obvious for delegitimation to speed up.

Applying this analytical concept of delegitimation to the great power competition between the United States and China is quite intriguing, because they are standing at the significant moment when the relative distribution of capabilities between them are narrowing down to the extents not sufficient enough to allow balancing or coalitioning of states led by China to throw the US-led order, but enough to raise the demand for alternative order from China. It is quite academically meaningful to examine

whether China is delegitimizing the United States.

### **3. Research Design**

#### 3.1 Scope and purpose

This research aims to empirically examine and technically prove China's behavior of delegitimizing the US-dominated order in 2009. Key questions of this research are as follows: Was China delegitimizing the United States in G20 Summits and Copenhagen Climate Change Conference (COP15) in 2009? Though some scholars argue that the current international system has already entered delegitimation phase, it is important to empirically examine whether China as the only comparable competitor of the United States was actually delegitimizing the United States and its order. The research will analyze China's delegitimation behaviors in G20 Summits and Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, because China was widely seen as seemingly outspoken or even assertive in both venues.

The year 2009 will be set as the time scope, because it is the following year of the 2008 global financial crisis, a critical event in the US-China relations. Amid the US economy was crumbling down in the midst of the global financial crisis triggered by the collapse of the U.S subprime mortgage market, China achieved the economic growth rate of a whopping 7.1 percent beyond expectations during the crisis. It flared up the

prospects that the 2008 global financial crisis would be further dramatically narrow down the relative economic gap between the United States and China, and even released many prospects on power transition between the two. The status of China has risen higher than ever before, as it was referred to as a part of G2 along with the United States. Then president of the World Bank Robert Zoellick and former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski championed the G2 format in tackling the crisis, and Niall Ferguson coined the term “Chimerica,” recognizing the increased role of China in the international financial market.<sup>40</sup> Under these circumstances, many experts released their interpretation on China more assertive and actively participating in a series of events in 2009 due to its boost in confidence. In this regard, the following year 2009 is a significant year worthy to be examined for China’s delegitimizing behavior.

G20 Summits and the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference will be adopted as case studies to see China’s delegitimation. China was paid international attention for its outspoken and proactive participation in G20 Summits and Copenhagen conference in 2009. Moreover, as these conference represents international financial order and climate change regime respectively, it will allow us to compare China’s delegitimation by sector.

For delegitimation in G20 Summits, the London Summit (02/04/2009) and the Pittsburgh Summit (24-25/09/2009) will be examined. Moreover, the Copenhagen

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<sup>40</sup> Niall Ferguson, “Niall Ferguson Says U.S.-China Cooperation Is Critical to Global Economic Health,” *Washington Post*, November 17, 2008, Accessed November 15, 2013; <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/16/AR2008111601736.html>

Climate Change Conference (7-18/12/2009) will be observed. Primary literature will be the main object to be dealt with. Since the purpose of this research is to see China's delegitimation behavior in a specific time period of the year 2009, it will focus on China's articulation or discourse rather than its actual behavior or policy implementation. Official remarks or opinion expressed by high-ranking officials of China in and out of these events will be covered. It will include official remarks by heads of state and state organizations related to these events, either in oral or written forms; articles and editorials of state-run media including People's Daily and Xinhua News Agency, and Global Times, which are widely considered to represent official position of the Chinese government and the Party.

### 3.2 Methodology

It is cross-sectional analysis and mainly qualitative study, but it will be complemented by quantitative technique to confirm the result.

#### a. Occurrence of delegitimation

Proving whether delegitimation was actually staged by a country is difficult task because legitimacy is too subtle and ambiguous to confirm a certain delegitimizing behavior of a nation actually undermined legitimacy or not. Therefore, there is a need to clarify the criteria in assessing delegitimation by China. Elements of delegitimation from the side of rival states discussed in the previous chapter will be chosen as a benchmark in judging occurrence of delegitimation. Among elements of delegitimation, state-level

elements should be primarily considered in judging whether China was actually delegitimizing the United States and its dominated order or not. System-level elements are beyond China's capacity and works as a permissive cause affecting the occurrence and degree of delegitimation while state-level elements are related to behavioral aspects. Therefore, whether China problematized the United States and its order and suggested a new agenda for the new order will be the criteria. These criteria will be applied strictly based on outcome, not intention. Since proving one's intention is almost out of the question, if a certain behavior of China satisfies the criteria, then it is confirmed to delegitimizing behavior regardless of its intention.

#### b. Degree of delegitimation

When state-level elements or behavioral conditions are met, it can be said that delegitimation takes place. However, it is not logical to expect the same degree of legitimation throughout different sectors. Therefore, it is needed to set a criteria for assessing the degree of China's delegitimation behavior in 2009, since there is no criteria in gauging the degree of delegitimation from the previous works. Three criteria for the degree of delegitimation can be suggested, which are specificity, adamancy, and disinterestedness of a state's behavior in problematizing and agenda-resetting. Specificity can be applied both to the target of problematization and the contents of the agenda. For the former, it means that the object of criticism should be concrete and obvious. For the latter, it means that a country's suggestion should not be limited to principle or future directions in general, but concrete enough to be operationalized at the

policy level. Adamancy is a relative concept in a sense that a country can be said adamant when a country criticizes the existing order or demand modification of it more boldly, compared to its past behavior or other countries within the system. Lastly, disinterestedness is related with representativeness of a country's criticism and suggestion. It can be said that a country's behavior is disinterested when it garners other countries support, even at the cost of its national interests.

**Table 3. Elements of Delegitimation in terms of Levels**

Level	Elements of Delegitimation
Pre-condition	<b>US Legitimacy exists</b>
	Order established/ In formation
	Leadership Owner
System-level	<b>Demand for order reduced</b>
	Preference for alternative order
	<b>Dispersion of power is initiated</b>
State-level	A challenger possess capabilities
	<b>Problematizing</b>
	Inputting Negative info/systemic threat
	<b>Agenda-resetting</b>
	Clarifying the situation with new information

Source: Summed up by author

### 3.3 Hypothesis

H1: In 2009, China was delegitimizing the U.S. and its dominated order in G20 Summits and Copenhagen Climate Change Conference.

Because the 2008 global financial crisis dramatically narrowed down the relative economic gap to the extent not sufficient enough to allow balancing or forging coalition against the United States, but enough for the US order to be problematized and modified, China would do delegitimation against the United States.

H2: China's delegitimation in G20 Summits would be strong while that in Copenhagen Climate Change Conference would be weak.

Since preconditions and system-level conditions vary across areas, it is reasonable to expect different degree of delegitimation in different areas. Compared to the international financial area where the United States holds a firm legitimacy as the designer of the order, legitimacy in the climate change regime is relatively weak. The difference in preconditions would be reflected in the degree of delegitimation made by China.

### III. CASE STUDY: CHINA'S DELEGITIMATION IN 2009

#### 1. China's Delegitimation in G20 Summits in 2009

The 2008 global financial crisis served as an opportunity for many states to question the effectiveness of the current financial order. It was initiated in the United States as its subprime mortgage market collapsed, unlike the previous round of financial crises. It precipitated and enhanced international recognition that the United States was the major culprit as well as the biggest victim. The outbreak of this round of financial crises was not seen as a mere result of U.S. policy mistakes but rather exposure of the intrinsic problems of the structure of the Bretton Woods system, which symbolizes U.S. hegemony in the international economy.

In the past, China was passive in expressing its stance under Deng Xiaoping's teaching of taoguangyanghui (keeping a low profile in international affairs), and remarks by Chinese decisionmakers toward the international community were therefore mostly regarded as no more than political rhetoric. However, China has become quite vocal with substantial and concrete arguments in the G20 summits beginning with the first Washington Summit held in November 2008.<sup>41</sup> In the first G20 Summit held in

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<sup>41</sup> 지만수, "G20 정상회의에서 나타난 중국의 전략과 경제적 이해관계," *현대중국연구*, 12 (1) (2010): 249.

Washington, then Chinese President Hu Jintao manifestly proposed three focal sectors in order to reform the international financial order.<sup>42</sup>

In the first three rounds of summits, China's argument revealed in Hu's address can be summed up into two parts: one is on the major culprit of the 2008 financial crisis, and the other is on the reform of the international financial system. Although China emphasized slightly different points in each of the G20 summits, three large agenda points related to the reform of the international financial system were consistently reiterated through the first three round of G20 summits. These three points were (1) reforming international financial institutions (IFI), (2) strengthening financial regulations, and (3) reforming the international monetary system. Therefore, China's delegitimation behavior will be examined based on these three points.

### 1.1 Problematize the US-dominated Order in G20 Summits: Clarification

In the first Washington Summit, China pointed out inappropriate macroeconomic policy and the failure of financial regulation as the driving causes of the recent round of the crisis. China's problematizing the U.S. financial order is closely related to its criticism against the outbreak of this round of the financial crisis. Since China claims that the recurrent outbreak of the financial crisis is undeniable evidence of

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<sup>42</sup> Hu Jintao, Addresses the G20 Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy in Washington, November 16, 2008. Accessed June 15, 2012. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/zyjh/t522600.shtml>

fundamental flaws of the current international financial order designed by the U.S., China's statements clearly problematized the current IFIs, regulating system, and international monetary system.

a. Reforming International Financial Institutions

Reforming IFIs is the key agenda that China proactively pushed in the London Summit. A few days before the London Summit, a commentary in *China Daily* pointed out that even after the U.S.- and Britain-manipulated Bretton Woods institutions collapsed and accordingly broke down the world financial system, international financial trade and negotiations continued to be conducted within the IMF framework.<sup>43</sup> It clearly states that the inherent defects of the IMF necessitated reforms to IFIs because of great changes in international affairs by saying, “the collapse of the Bretton Woods institutions and the end of the Cold War, and the ongoing global financial crisis has laid bare the inherent defects of the IMF.” Meanwhile, it seemed that China perceived its suggestions of IFI reforms as entailing changes in the power structure of international politics. It stated that “rebuilding or reforming the IMF not only means thorough overhauling of its purposes, functions, and operation and management system, but also changing its US- and Britain-led power structure.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> “China deserves greater role in IMF’s reform,” *China Daily*, March 24, 2009.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

The sub-agenda for reforming IFIs that China proposed during summits are largely divided into two: governing structure of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) and the issue of their financing. Firstly, in the governing structure of IMF, America's quota accounts for 17.674 percent of the total and its voting rights 16.732 percent. In contrast, China's quota and voting rights account for 3.999 percent and 3.807 percent respectively. In an editorial released on 1 April, 2009 in *Peoples' Daily*, a state-run media, China fiercely criticized the biased governing structure of the IMF where the United States possess a "one-nation veto" in passing agendas relevant to the international currency and money.<sup>45</sup> It says that since 85 percent of votes are required for passing a deal on the agenda, the United States can hold up any agenda with its 16.732 percent of voting rights. An article in *China Daily* released after the London Summit also harshly criticizes the IMF's existing voting mechanism. It indicates that the current share of the U.S. and EU within the IMF, which are 17 percent and 32 percent respectively, is "tantamount to extending them the privilege to veto any major resolution, which is unfair to the huge number of developing countries."<sup>46</sup>

China's criticism of the current IMF quota structure is related to the representativeness of developing countries. It regards that the IFIs do not fully reflect changing nature of the international financial reality. An article in *People's Daily* clearly shows the dissatisfaction of China in this matter. It emphasizes the fact that the growth

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<sup>45</sup> "G20峰会：我们关注什么," *People's Daily*, April 1, 2009. Accessed June 14, 2012. available from <http://mnc.people.com.cn/GB/9062255.html>

<sup>46</sup> "A financial body in need of urgent reform," *China Daily*, April 9, 2009.

rate of the world economy decreased by 1.7 percent in 2009, the first ever negative growth since the Second World War, while developing countries went through economic growth of 2.1 percent. Based on this reality, the article argues that it is right for developing countries to have proper rights and obligations commensurate with their capabilities in the governing structure.<sup>47</sup> An editorial in *China Daily* also said that the IMF cannot mobilize global resources proportionately and thus efficiently address global challenges if it does not go through with reforms in line with the new global economic reality.<sup>48</sup>

Secondly, the key sub-agenda that China pushed ahead with had to do with IFI financing. With regards to the IFIs' financing, Chinese Vice-Premier Wang Qishan said, "It is unfair and unrealistic [...] to judge a member economy's proportion of increased contribution to the IMF only according to its foreign reserves."

#### b. Strengthening Financial Regulation

China attributes the outbreak of the recent round of the financial crisis to the failure of financial regulations mechanisms.<sup>49</sup> China's criticism of financial regulation regards the standard or norm of financial regulation, and rules of conduct for credit rating

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<sup>47</sup> "直面G20:新兴经济体诉求应得到认真对待," 人民日报, April 2, 2009.

<sup>48</sup> "Boost to IMF reform," *China Daily*, September 5, 2009.

<sup>49</sup> Hu Jintao, Cooperating Hand in Hand and Pulling Together in Times of Trouble in London, April 3, 2009. Accessed June 15, 2012. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/zyjh/t556209.shtml>

agencies. On the standard or norm of financial regulation, Zhou Xiaochuan, the head of the People's Bank of China, said that the regulatory framework based on capital-adequacy ratios was vulnerable, particularly to the pro-cyclicality of capital buffers, and that national authorities responsible for overall financial stability could play an active role.

*The ongoing crisis has exposed much vulnerability in capital adequacy framework of banks in the following areas: inadequate capture of risks by the Basel II framework for complex credit products; the minimum capital requirement and the quality of capital did not provide adequate buffer during the crisis; the pro-cyclicality of capital adequacy amplified economic oscillations; the differences in capital requirements among different types of financial institutions. (Zhou, Changing Pro-cyclicality for Financial and Economic Stability)*

China's criticism on rules of conduct of credit rating agencies was more fierce. Zhou Xiaochuan, in an essay on Changing Pro-cyclicality for Financial and Economic Stability, underlined the fundamental weakness of two major international financial regulatory measures—credit rating agencies and BIS rates—and pointed out that the lack of transparency of those tools led to the financial crisis.<sup>50</sup> He expressed grave concerns about the role of rating agencies, the so-called "big three" - Standard & Poor's, Moody's,

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<sup>50</sup> 周小川：关于改变宏观微观顺周期性的进一步探讨，March 26, 2000. Accessed June 14, 2012.

[http://www.pbc.gov.cn/publish/hanglingdao/2950/2010/20100914192433491168056/20100914192433491168056\\_.html](http://www.pbc.gov.cn/publish/hanglingdao/2950/2010/20100914192433491168056/20100914192433491168056_.html), (Zhou Xiaochuan: Changing pro-cyclicality for financial and economic stability, <http://www.bis.org/review/r090421b.pdf>)

and Fitch.

*The global financial system relies heavily on the external credit ratings for investment decisions and risk management, giving rise to a prominent feature of pro-cyclicality. The rating industry is dominated by a few large players, which provide practically all important rating services. (Zhou, Changing Pro-cyclicality for Financial and Economic Stability)*

This argument of enhancing supervision over credit rating agencies was repeated by Xu Xieren, then Chinese financial minister.<sup>51</sup> An editorial in *People's Daily* even tried to make the case that it is imperative to fundamentally restructure the international rating system in order to prevent future financial crises.<sup>52</sup>

#### c. Improving International Monetary System

Delivering a speech at the first G20 summit held in Washington in November 2008, Hu Jintao presented the gradual diversification of international currency system as a key element of reform of the international monetary system. In the following year, days before the second summit in London, Zhou Xiaochuan, the head of the central bank of China, posted 3 articles on the website of the central bank. In those articles, he asserted

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<sup>51</sup> “謝旭人：加快推進國際貨幣體系多元化,” *第一財經日報*, March 27, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://finance.sina.com.cn/roll/20090327/02576031320.shtml>

<sup>52</sup> “重塑國際評級新體系勢在必行,” *人民日報*, August 24, 2011. Accessed June 15, 2012. <http://world.people.com.cn/GB/15492266.html>

that the Special Drawing Rights (SDR) be the key currency in the international monetary market.

In the article titled Reform of the international monetary system, Zhou argued, “The outbreak of the crisis and its spillover to the entire world reflect the inherent vulnerabilities and systemic risks in the existing international monetary system.”<sup>53</sup>

*The above question, however, as the ongoing financial crisis demonstrates, is far from being solved, and has become even more severe due to the inherent weaknesses of the current international monetary system. [...] The acceptance of credit-based national currencies as major international reserve currencies, as is the case in the current system, is a rare special case in history. (Zhou, Reform of the international monetary system)*

He pointed out that Triffin’s Dilemma, a phenomenon that the issuing countries of reserve currencies cannot maintain the value of the reserve currencies while providing liquidity to the world, still do exist, and concluded that “the costs of such a system to the world may have exceeded its benefits.” By suggesting an international reserve currency with “a stable value, rule-based issuance and manageable supply, so as to achieve the objective of safeguarding global economic and financial stability,” Zhou backhandedly blamed the U.S. dollar as lacking such values.

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<sup>53</sup> 周小川, “关于改革国际货币体系的思考,” March 23, 2009. Accessed June 14, 2012  
[http://www.pbc.gov.cn/publish/hanglingdao/2950/2010/20100914193900497315048/20100914193900497315048\\_.html](http://www.pbc.gov.cn/publish/hanglingdao/2950/2010/20100914193900497315048/20100914193900497315048_.html)  
(Zhou Xiaochuan, Reform the international monetary system,  
<http://www.bis.org/review/r090402c.pdf>)

*People's Daily* also expressed its strong dissatisfaction with the position of the U.S. dollar in an editorial titled, "How to break through international financial reform? The answer is to destroy US dollar's monopoly and hegemony". It says, "By abolishing the practice of positioning a national currency as a means of payment and reserve, we can negate developed countries' veto power and put a constraint on the indiscrete issuance of the U.S. dollar."<sup>54</sup>

A few days before the London Summit started, *People's Daily* released an article, saying that the "U.S. dollar's position is under unprecedented challenges. Some countries including China and Russia released statements to call for the reform of the international monetary system led by the U.S. dollar to end the U.S. dollar hegemony." It blamed the current behavior of the United States as a "money printing machine" and argued that such behavior made calling for overhauling the financial and monetary system the international community's common desire.

After the London Summit was over, *China Daily* released commentary saying that the "meeting was still far from working out a feasible formula to curb the unchecked issuance of the dollar, the cause of the ongoing global financial crisis."<sup>55</sup> It said that the U.S. had long been adept at employing an "egoistic" financial policy to serve its economy. It harshly criticized that "excessively issuing the dollar and raising national debt has long served as two major engines of US economic growth [...] the dollar's

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<sup>54</sup> 国际金融体系改革如何破提?打破美元垄断霸权, *人民日报*, April 21, 2009. Accessed June 14, 2012. <http://finance.huanqiu.com/roll/2009-04/439559.html>

<sup>55</sup> Zhang Monan, "A global economy that goes beyond the dollar," *China Daily*, April 20, 2009.

status as the global reserve currency has easily enabled the world's largest economy to shift part of the price it should shoulder for inflation to other states.”

A commentary in *China Daily* traced back the history of the U.S. dollar hegemony and criticized the dollar's position as the world currency. It tried to reveal the unjustifiable features of the U.S. dollar's current position by mentioning that at the Bretton Woods conference prior to the end of World War II, John Maynard Keynes raised the idea of a world currency, but the U.S. forced other participants into concession by taking advantage of its possession of more than half the world's gold reserves and one-third of its trade volume.<sup>56</sup> It claimed that “a declining U.S. economy and the country's decreasing clout means the dollar's hegemonic position is difficult to sustain.”

## 1.2 Architecture of the new order in G20 Summits: Agenda-Resetting

### a. Reforming International Financial Institutions

At the first Washington Summit, Hu suggested “advancing reform of the international financial organizations and increasing the representativeness and say of the developing countries in such organizations.” This suggestion was reiterated at both the London and Pittsburgh Summits.

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<sup>56</sup> Ding Yifan, “Dollar living on borrowed time in this defining hour,” *China Daily*, April 1, 2009.

*Fifth, the governance structure of the IMF and the World Bank should be improved to enhance the representativeness and voice of the developing countries. (Hu, the London Summit)*

*We should follow through on the timetable and the roadmap agreed upon at the London summit, increase the representation and voice of developing countries and push for substantive progress in the reform. We should improve the existing decision-making process and mechanism in international financial institutions and encourage more extensive and effective participation of all parties. (Hu, the Pittsburg Summit)<sup>57</sup>*

More specifically, at the London Summit, Hu suggested that IFIs should give more assistance to developing countries. He said that China supports the increase of financing for the IMF and that the IMF should combine quota-based contributions with voluntary contributions. Moreover, he suggested that the IMF should strengthen and improve its oversight of the macroeconomic policies of various economies, “major reserve currency issuing economies in particular.”

*People’s Daily* released an adamant article, which argued that restoring the IMF’s assurance role as the “lender of the last resort” was necessary.<sup>58</sup> It suggested two specific measures. One was addressing the IMF quota system by transferring 5 to 10 percent of its quota share from developed countries to the rest of the member states. The

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<sup>57</sup> Remarks by President Hu Jintao at the Third G20 Financial Summit, September 25, 2009. Accessed June 15, 2012. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceun/eng/zt/hu2009summit/t608103.htm>

<sup>58</sup> “重建“最后贷款人”的保障功能 IMF可望“衰年”变法,” *人民日报*, April 1, 2009.

other was to lower the current 85 percent of votes required for passing a deal on the agenda to 80 percent to “negate the U.S. one-veto right.”

Such position was repeated by the *Global Times*, when it assessed the decision of the Pittsburgh Summit to increase developing countries’ voting power at the IMF by at least five percent, “a major move to improve the international organization’s credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness.”<sup>59</sup>

More specifically, Wang Qishan argued that the IMF member economy’s stage of development, its per capita GDP and the structure and composition of its foreign reserves should be taken into account when deciding how much it should contribute.<sup>60</sup> Other experts add more elements, such as the degree of a donor country’s dependence on foreign reserves to ensure its economic security, which should also be important factors in gauging its contribution to world financial bodies.<sup>61</sup>

#### b. Strengthening Financial Regulation

The Chinese government suggested that the international community reestablish the standards for financial supervision and norms, regulate action principles and supervisory mechanism of credit rating agencies, and establish an early warning system for financial indicators, all of which are designed to increase the transparency of

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<sup>59</sup> “G20 shifts more IMF voting power to developing countries,” *Global Times*, September 27, 2009.

<sup>60</sup> “A financial body in need of urgent reform,” *China Daily*, April 9, 2009.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

the supervisory system.

At the London Summit, Hu underscored the importance of reinforcing and improving supervision over the macroeconomic policies of major economies, especially those policies affecting the money supply of issuing reserve currencies. And this is the first-ever remark by the Chinese government on the necessity of having strict regulatory measures in place. Similar arguments are reiterated at the Pittsburg Summit.

*Fourth, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should reinforce and improve supervision over the macroeconomic policies of related parties, especially the major economies issuing reserve currencies. Particular focus should be put on the regulation of currency issuance policies. (Hu, London Summit)*

*Major reserve currency issuing countries should take into account and balance the implications of their monetary policies for both their own economies and the world economy with a view to upholding stability of international financial markets [...] We should move forward the reform of the international financial supervisory and regulatory regime. (Hu, Pittsburg Summit)*

China also suggests that the Financial Stability Forum (FSF) should play a bigger role. Hu says at the London Summit, “We expect to see more practical proposals from the FSF on ways to stabilize financial markets and enhance financial regulation. And we hope that the FSF will have closer coordination with other IFIs to bring about early progress in the reform of the international financial system.”

### c. Improving International Monetary System

At the London Summit, Hu Jintao officially stated the necessity of improving the international monetary system and imposing regulations on the issuance of reserve currency.

*We should improve the international monetary system and the reserve currency issuing regulatory mechanism, maintain the relative stability of the exchange rates of major reserve currencies and promote a diverse and reasonable international currency system. (Hu, London Summit)*

Zhou Xiaochuan made stronger calls for these reforms than Hu, adding that a "super-sovereign reserve currency" would be required.<sup>62</sup> He also stressed the need to expand SDR, which would enable drawing international liquidity from the IMF under certain conditions, and to expand the range of currency that constitutes the SDR currency basket in a way that includes the currencies of major economic powers.

*The SDR has the features and potential to act as a super-sovereign reserve currency. Moreover, an increase in SDR allocation would help the Fund address its resources problem and the difficulties in the voice and*

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<sup>62</sup> 周小川, “关于改革国际货币体系的思考,” March 23, 2009. Accessed June 15, 2012. [http://www.pbc.gov.cn/publish/hanglingdao/2950/2010/20100914193900497315048/20100914193900497315048\\_.html](http://www.pbc.gov.cn/publish/hanglingdao/2950/2010/20100914193900497315048/20100914193900497315048_.html)  
(Zhou Xiaochuan, Reform the international monetary system, <http://www.bis.org/review/r090402c.pdf>)

*representation reform.* (Zhou, Reform of the international monetary system)

Zhou believes that the introduction of SDR as an international reserve currency not only can disconnect Triffin's Dilemma, but can also resolve global imbalances and help the Fund address its difficulties in maintaining resources and making reforms in representation. Zhou suggests the readjustment of the basket of currencies forming the basis for SDR valuation should be expanded to include currencies of all major economies, with the consideration of GDP as a weight. He also suggests to broaden the usage of the SDR, which is now only used between governments and international institutions, to be used in payment in international trade and financial transactions.

## **2. China's Delegitimation in Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in 2009**

The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, also known as the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15), was held for 12 days between 7 -18 of December in 2009 to come up with a post-Kyoto Protocol regime, which was supposed to expire in 2012. In the end, the conference failed to come up with any legally binding document and concluded with the Copenhagen Accord, a document in a softer form. China's attitudes and behaviors during the

conference was widely noted among government officials, pundits, and journalists in connection to this failure.

An editorial in the *New York Times* in 2007 described the Sino-U.S. relationship as being an “alliance of denial,” criticizing both countries’ lukewarm efforts towards climate change and claiming that both states were “using each other’s inaction as an excuse to do nothing” in tacking the issue of climate change despite the clear awareness of the urgency.<sup>63</sup> At the Copenhagen conference, these lukewarm attitudes of both states changed dramatically. This dramatic shift in the attitudes of the two powers indicates that the failure of the conference to draw up a legally binding document was not a result of inaction but excessively fierce competition between the United States and China for leadership in designing the new climate change regime after the Kyoto Protocol. Indeed, China maintained exceptionally assertive and provocative attitudes toward the United States. Then Premier Wen Jiabao did not attend the meeting with U.S. President Obama, instead sending a second-tier official in the foreign ministry, which was seen as a diplomatic misdemeanor by many.<sup>64</sup>

The Copenhagen conference was given much attention because it came at a time when the leadership of Europe had waned and the United States and China were

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<sup>63</sup> “Warming and Global Security,” *New York Times*, April 20, 2007. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/20/opinion/20fri2.html>

<sup>64</sup> Mark Lynas, “How do I Know China Wrecked the Copenhagen Deal? I was in the Room,” *The guardian*, 22 December 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/dec/22/copenhagen-climate-change-mark-lynas>; “Chinese premier snubs Obama twice at Copenhagen,” *Global Times*, December 21, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/china/diplomacy/2009-12/493263.html>

trying to maintain their leadership in designing the post-Kyoto regime of tackling the issue of climate change.<sup>65</sup> In his speech at Copenhagen, Obama articulated the United States' strong willingness to take the lead when he said, "That's why we've renewed our leadership within international climate change negotiations." U.S. leadership, which had been weakened by the Senate's refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol in 2001, was being strengthened as Obama participated proactively in the COP15.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's speech in Copenhagen was equally clear in its message about China's position. In his speech, Wen suggested four principles that must be adhered to, which are (1) consistency of outcomes, (2) the fairness of rules, (3) practicality of targets, and (4) effectiveness of institutions and mechanisms. These principles are related to the agenda pursued by China. Consistency of outcomes is related to the framework within which the international community is tackling climate change. Fairness reflects China's understanding of different obligations that developed and developing countries should bear. Practicality reflects China's ideas on the implementation of the emission reduction targets for developed countries in the second commitment period that would be set in the post-Kyoto Protocol. Lastly, effectiveness relates to the institutional mechanism that holds countries to be responsible, especially on the issue of the transfer of climate-friendly technologies and financial support to small island states, least developed countries, landlocked countries, and African countries.

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<sup>65</sup> 신범식, "기후변화의 국제정치와 미중관계," *미중관계 2025*, 김병국, 전재성, 차두현, 최강 공편 (EAI, 2012), 239.

Therefore, China's delegitimation in Copenhagen will be viewed based on these agenda points.

## 2.1 Problematize the US-dominated Order in COP15: Clarification

### a. Framework for tackling climate change

Wen's speech challenged the United States in several ways by reiterating principles held important by China, particularly on the issue of designing the framework for tackling climate change. With the term "consistency of outcomes," Wen made clear that the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol should be maintained, as they were the so-far consensus of the international community.

*Global Times* revealed China's criticism against the EU and the United States when quoting the Sudanese delegation that "developing countries reject developed countries' objective of concluding another legally binding instrument that would put together the obligations of developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol and similar actions of developing countries."<sup>66</sup> Though this criticism was against developed countries as a whole, it targeted the United States in particular because China's adherence to the dual process of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol was in sharp

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<sup>66</sup> "Developing nations united on Kyoto Protocol, EU, US differ on final Copenhagen document," *Global Times*, December 8, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/china/diplomacy/2009-12/490378.html>

contrast with the U.S. plan to design post-Kyoto regime on a clean slate, as a non-Party to the Kyoto Protocol. Jiang Yu, a spokesperson of the Chinese foreign ministry, made a strong condemnation developed countries had tried to deny the UNFCCC, abandon the Kyoto Protocol and deviate from the Bali Road Map, while they put forward various unreasonable requirements for developing countries.<sup>67</sup>

b. Common but differentiated responsibility

China strongly urged developed countries to accept a larger burden of responsibility, differentiated from the obligations of developing countries. Underscoring the importance of adhering to the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” as the “core and bedrock” of international cooperation on climate change, Wen clearly held developed nations to account for current global warming, because their historical contribution to global warming outweighed that of developing countries.

*“ If we all agree that carbon dioxide emissions are the direct cause for climate change, then it is all too clear who should take the primary responsibility.[...] It is totally unjustified to ask developing countries to undertake emission reduction targets beyond their due obligations and capabilities in disregard of historical responsibilities, per capita emissions and different levels of development.” (Wen Jiabao, Copenhagen Conference)*

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<sup>67</sup> “中方希望各方履行义务推动气候变化国际合作取得新进展,” *国际在线专稿*, December 22, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://gb.cri.cn/27824/2009/12/22/3245s2711925.htm>

Furthermore, China explicitly blamed developed countries for not implementing the emission reduction targets in the first commitment period by 2012 set under the Kyoto Protocol. He Yafei, the Chinese vice foreign minister, said that the commitment made so far by developed countries collectively amounted to only a 16-18 percent cut, and this was far less than the proposition put forth by scientists at a UN panel on climate change, which said that a 25-40% cut in carbon emissions by rich nations by 2020 was necessary to rein in global warming.<sup>68</sup> When Xie Zhenhua, vice minister of the National Development and Reform Commission(NDRC) said, “many sticking points are yet to be resolved, such as the binding targets of emissions reduction for the United States, which is not a party to the Kyoto Protocol,” he was well aware of the U.S. position in the Copenhagen negotiations.<sup>69</sup>

#### c. Support for developing countries

The Chinese government criticized the United States for joining other rich nations in raising 100 billion USD annually by 2020 to help developing countries combat climate change, because “it set a condition that emerging countries should accept international monitoring of its mitigation action.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> “Failure in Copenhagen conference not an option: official,” *Global Times*, December 14, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/china/diplomacy/2009-12/491626.html>

<sup>69</sup> “Progress made in Copenhagen talks, sticking points remain: Chinese official,” *Global Times*, December 15, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/china/diplomacy/2009-12/491951.html>

<sup>70</sup> “Financial support a benchmark for Copenhagen success: Premier,” *Xinhua*, December 8,

Xie Zhenhua said, “On the issue of financing, developed countries have emphasized the role of the business and the market, which comes out of intention to shun their obligation at the governmental level and even to make developing countries to finance, or attach strings on the use of climate fund by developing countries.”<sup>71</sup> Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said at a regular news briefing, “If the talks have encountered some difficulties and made slow progress, the main reason is that the developed countries have moved backward on the key issues of funding and technology.”<sup>72</sup>

## 2.2 Architecture of the new order in COP15: Agenda-Resetting

China’s idea on the new order of climate change is described in *Implementaion of the Bali Roadmap: China’s Position on the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference* published by National Development and Reform Commission (NRDC) in May 20, 2009.

### a. Framework for tackling climate change

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2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-12/18/content\\_12665940\\_1.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-12/18/content_12665940_1.htm)

<sup>71</sup> 解振华发达国家欲逃避义务致关键问题进展甚微, *新华网*. December 28, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://finance.sina.com.cn/review/20091226/19517159304.shtml>

<sup>72</sup> Jiang Yu, “China says rich countries responsible for slow Copenhagen talks progress,” *People’s Daily Online*, December 15, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6843198.html>

Wen said, “The outcome of this conference must stick to rather than obscure the basic principles enshrined in the Convention and the Protocol. It must follow rather than deviate from the mandate of the ‘Bali Roadmap.’”<sup>73</sup> China supports the dual track, which is to secure the full, effective and sustained implementation of the UNFCCC by making corresponding arrangements in terms of mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and financial support on the one track, and to determine further quantified emission reduction targets for developed countries for the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol.<sup>74</sup>

#### b. Common but Differentiated Responsibility

China suggests to set deeper quantified emission reduction targets for developing countries for the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, and to ensure the comparability of quantified emission reduction commitments by developed countries that are Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and those that are not.

#### c. Support for Developing Countries

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<sup>73</sup> Wen Jiabao, Build Consensus and Strengthen Cooperation To Advance the Historical Process of Combating Climate Change, December 18, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/zyjh/t647091.shtml>

<sup>74</sup> National Development and Reform Commission, Implementaion of the Bali Roadmap: China’s Position on the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, May 20, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. [http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/t20090521\\_280382.htm](http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/t20090521_280382.htm)

What is new in China's suggestion is the fact that it considers different priorities for the developing countries that face the more direct issue of development and elimination of poverty than that of tackling climate change.

Recognizing that both mitigation and adaptation are integral components of climate change, China puts clear emphasis on adaptation as being "more real and urgent" for developing countries compared to mitigation, which is an arduous task over a longer time horizon. China regards that financing and technology are indispensable means to achieve mitigation and adaptation. Based on this logic, the Chinese government argues, "the fulfillment of commitments by developed countries to provide financing, technology transfer and capacity building support to developing countries is a condition sine qua non for developing countries to effectively mitigate and adapt to climate change."

China brought the financing and technological support to developing countries onto the agenda. Wen stressed, "This is an unshirkable moral responsibility as well as a legal obligation that they must fulfill." Wen urged developed countries to speed up the transfer of climate-friendly technologies and effectively help developing countries. In his speech, Wen highlighted the necessity of support for small island states, least developed countries, landlocked countries and African countries. China supported the prior use of funds for tackling climate change by least-developed, small islands and African countries, said Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> "China supports prior use of climate funds by least-developed countries," *People's Daily Online*, December 15, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6843204.html>

He Yafei expressed Chinese government's position on this matter, by saying, "the international community should secure developing countries' economic development, eradicate the poverty issue, and never demand that they abandon their development rights." He also pointed out the clear distinction in obligations between the developed and developing, saying, "it is outrageous to force the latter to shoulder the obligation to reduce emissions."<sup>76</sup>

### **3. Assessment of China's Delegitimation Behavior**

Seen from the previous section, it is reasonable to say that China conducted delegitimation both in G20 Summits and Copenhagen Climate Conference, because China's behaviors in both areas satisfied the state-level conditions. Therefore, it is important to gauge whether China's delegitimizing behaviors in G20 Summits and Copenhagen Climate Change Conference were strong or weak. Strong or weak delegitimation will be judged based on the three criteria earlier mentioned, which are specificity, adamancy and disinterestedness.

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<sup>76</sup> "发达国家履行历史责任是谈判成功的关键," 人民日报, December 13, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013.

### 3.1 Strong delegitimation in G20 Summits

#### a. Specificity

Unlike at the Washington Summit held in 2008, Hu's speeches in London and Pittsburgh made more detailed suggestions. At the Washington Summit, Hu suggested four principles in reforming the international financial system, which are "comprehensive, balanced, incremental and pragmatic." Such principles were more specifically suggested at the following London and Pittsburgh Summits. China's problematization of the current financial order was more than superficial.

Specificity in the targets of problematization and the contents of agenda that China suggested in G20 Summits can be reaffirmed in other financial venues after London and Pittsburgh. At the twentieth meeting of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) held in October 4, 2009, Yi Gang, the vice governor of the People's Bank of China, made an important statement related to IFI reform. Yi clearly pointed out that the outbreak of the 2008 financial crisis in the fault of developed countries. Yi attributes the catastrophe to the failure of major international financial institutions to issue timely early warnings and misaligned quota shares of the IMF. Yi sees that underrepresentation of emerging markets and developing countries hamper the IMF governance and even-handed surveillance, ultimately "undermining Fund

legitimacy and effectiveness.”<sup>77</sup> Yi also made concrete suggestions in IMFC.<sup>78</sup> Li’s suggestion can be understood as China’s official position given the timing of his statement, which was made 10 days after Hu’s Pittsburgh address. Given Li’s suggestion, China’s problematizing and resetting agenda was far beyond a mere principle or direction, but detailed and concrete enough to be operationalized at the policy level.

#### b. Adamancy

China’s behavior can be said to play a role of alerting other states about the irrationality and partiality of the current international financial system. In the Washington Summit, Hu suggested promoting the “diversity of the international currency” in order to guarantee the stability of the international monetary system. In the London Summit, the argument of the Chinese government slightly changed from diversification of the international currency to supervising and monitoring the macroeconomic policy of a country in charge of money supply of issuing reserve currencies. This argument in London is obviously targeting the United States, and tries to put restraints on the macroeconomic policy of the United States, which is still within the sovereignty of it.

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<sup>77</sup> Yi Gang, statement at the twentieth meeting of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), October 4, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://www.imf.org/external/am/2009/imfc/statement/eng/chn.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

Zhou Xiaochuan's suggestion of introducing SDR as an international reserve currency is significantly adamant given the U.S. dollar's hegemony in the current structure of the international monetary system. The proposition of introducing suprasovereign money is intended to negate the dollar's hegemony, undoubtedly undermining the material foundation of U.S. hegemony. Zhou's diagnosis of the current financial system by resorting to mentioning the Triffin's Dilemma is too fierce and exceptionally adamant to be seen as that coming from a head of central bank of a state, since it explicitly indicates intrinsic problems of the U.S. dollar-centered system. One noticeable point is that his argument does not simply suggest the expansion of SDR within the purview of the current U.S. dollar-centered currency system. Rather, he points out the need for gradual replacement of the existing key currency, and he believes that the replacement is possible in the longer-term perspective. His idea of introducing the super-sovereignty reserve currency was repeated in his another essay, *On savings ratio*.<sup>79</sup>

With respect to China's suggestion of the "global reserve currency" based on the SDR for reforming the international monetary system, Zhao Sijun, a vice president of the Fiscal and Finance Center of People's University of China, said such a suggestion should be seen as one intended to point out the irrationality of the current system rather than the one with realistic considerations.<sup>80</sup> However, it is hard to negate the adamancy

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<sup>79</sup> 周小川, 关于储蓄率问题的思考, March 24, 2009. Accessed June 10, 2012.  
[http://www.pbc.gov.cn/publish/hanglingdao/2950/2010/20100914193714886999180/20100914193714886999180\\_.html](http://www.pbc.gov.cn/publish/hanglingdao/2950/2010/20100914193714886999180/20100914193714886999180_.html)  
(Zhou Xiaochuan, Reform the international monetary system,  
<http://www.bis.org/review/r090402c.pdf>)

<sup>80</sup> “赵锡军：由G20峰会谈国际金融和中国经济战略,” *People's Daily*, April 7, 2009.

of Zhou's suggestion even if it lacks realistic consideration. Zhou Xiaochuan's argument on the global reserve currency is fundamentally different from Hu's argument on "diversification of the international currency system," proposed in the first Washington summit. Currently, even though the U.S. dollar is being recognized as the key currency in the international monetary market, it does not necessary mean the monopoly of the U.S. dollar. Besides the U.S. dollar, the Euro, the Japanese Yen, the U.K. pound, and other currencies are being used as reserve and transaction currency. Given this, Zhou Xiaochuna's argument on the adoption of "the global reserve currency" by SDR is much more adamant one than that of Hu.

#### c. Disinterestedness

As a country that possesses the largest foreign reserves in the U.S. dollar, it is hard to say the suggestion of the global currency alternative to the U.S. dollar is not related to its national interests. However, what China suggested through Zhou Xiaochuan is not to boost the yuan's position. Rather it suggests a common currency expanding the usage of SDR, and this gives room for interpretation that China's suggestion contributes to providing global public goods beyond its national interests.

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Accessed June 10 2012. <http://tv.people.com.cn/GB/14644/9084044.html>

### 3.2 Weak delegitimation in the Copenhagen Climate Conference

#### a. Specificity

When compared to Wen Jiabao's speech in London and Pittsburgh, what China suggested in Copenhagen is nothing more than principles and general direction of the future efforts that the international community should exert. The specificity of China's delegitimation in Copenhagen lags far behind that of the G20 Summits. However, it is hard to make a simple comparison between the two, because difference in specificity may come from differences in the developmental phase of the international financial order and the climate change regime. In the case of climate change regimes, it has not reached the level that requires specific policies to be prepared. Still, the Parties' agreement on the basic principles, rules and norms in combating climate change is needed for the regime formation after the Kyoto Protocol expires. Therefore, given the different phases of development in which the financial order and climate regime are situated, it is hard to say contents of China's agenda in Copenhagen lacks specificity.

Rather, the specificity that China problematizes in Copenhagen falls short of the level of G20 Summits. Contrary to the G20 Summits, where the object of China's criticism is undoubtedly the United States and its order, the object of criticism made by China in Copenhagen is largely developed countries as a whole. In this regard, China's delegitimation lacks specificity to some extent.

b. Adamancy

Wen's remarks aim to expose the unfair or unjustifiable aspect of developed countries' argument to share the burden in combating climate change. Considering Washington's efforts to bring emerging big economies such as China and Brazil in to take responsibility, China's remarks and stance can be seen as a clear opposition toward the United States and other developed countries. Wen's remarks are clearly directed at the United States to some extent, given China's blame on the U.S. for attaching strings to its financing aid. In his speech, Wen said, "Chinese government has set the target for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. This is a voluntary action China has taken in the light of its national circumstances. We have not attached any condition to the target, not have we linked to the target of any other country."

However, it is doubtful how adamant the agenda that China suggested in Copenhagen was, compared to its past one and that of other countries, particularly the G77. China's position on Copenhagen largely reflects the G77's position on climate change. Though China's position was outspoken, there was nothing new in its position since it was representing G77's position. China's new suggestion was its emphasis on the need to consider the developmental phase of developing countries in tackling the climate change issue. China might lead the creation of the discourse within G77, but it is hard to recognize novelty of its agenda in Copenhagen.

c. Disinterestedness

China represents the position of the G77. China's arguments are not based solely on its national interests, because they suggest a comprehensive institutional framework that can provide support for least developing countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), which China itself does not belong to.

China perceives that the criticism against itself at Copenhagen comes from its role as a balancer which "balance the interests of the developed world and the developing group."<sup>81</sup>

China voluntarily pledged to cut per capita GDP and *People's Daily* assessed the influence of its pledges to be tremendous. If CO<sub>2</sub> emissions decreased by 40-50 percent by 2020, it would amount to 78 billion dollars to be injected on an annual basis, which is the same amount as having every Chinese family pay 166 dollars every year.<sup>82</sup> Though China resisted U.S. demands to take the mandatory inspection and to make its pledge obligatory under the post-Kyoto regime, China made substantial pledges that had a clear possibility of undermining its national interests.

But at the same time, China cannot be free from criticism that it secured its national interests in economic development at the cost of climate change when Wen Jiabao stressed China's position still as the developing country and its underdevelopment

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<sup>81</sup> "Copenhagen changes climate of world politics," *Global Times*, December 25, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. [http://www.globaltimes.cn/opinion/editorial/2009-12/494299\\_2.html](http://www.globaltimes.cn/opinion/editorial/2009-12/494299_2.html)

<sup>82</sup> "应对气候变化中国展现风范," *人民日报*, December 18, 2009.

by saying “According to the UN standards, we still have 150 million people living below the poverty line and we therefore face the arduous task of developing the economy and improving people’s livelihood.”

Standing in line with developing countries, China speaks for the positions of developing countries. Since China identifies itself as the “biggest developing country in the world,” trying to hold its position as a developing country, it can be said that China’s advocating developing countries is a mere expression of its national interests.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, however, China clearly does set a new agenda which is beneficial to developing countries, because it is distinct from the agenda of the vested interests of developed countries.

China’s emphasis on these countries is clear evidence that its agenda or suggestion on this issue deviates from its efforts to secure national interests. Though China’s emissions surpass those of the United States on an annual basis, it would take decades before Chinese emissions surpass U.S. emissions on a cumulative basis. Therefore, China could take firm actions to tackle emission targets with the excuses of the absence of U.S. commitments.<sup>84</sup>

In sum, compared in the G20 Summits, China’s delegitimation in Copenhagen is weak in terms of specificity, adamancy, and disinterestedness both in its

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<sup>83</sup> Hu Jintao, Joint Hands to Address Climate Change, statement at the Opening Plenary Session of The United Nations Summit on Climate Change, 23 September 2009. Accessed November 15, 2013. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceun/eng/zt/hu2009summit/t606111.htm>

<sup>84</sup> Joanna I. Lewis, “China’s Strategic Priorities in International Climate Change Negotiations,” *Washington Quarterly*, 31(1) (2008): 162-163.

problematization and agenda-resetting. This difference in degree of delegitimation in different sectors gives intriguing points to be interpreted, along with the timing of delegitimation emerged the following year of the outbreak of the 2008 financial crisis.

## **4. Implications**

### 4.1 Temporal significance of China's delegitimation in 2009

To confirm China's delegitimation in 2009, a quantitative approach can be supplementary. China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) website ([www.cnki.net](http://www.cnki.net)), which is run by Tsinghua University, offers a database providing integrated Chinese knowledge-based information resources. For related words to delegitimation, America's hegemony (美国霸权) and American leadership (美国领导) for testing the problematization of the U.S. order; new international order (国际新秩序) and reform of the international order (改革国际秩序) for agenda-resetting for the new order were selected and went through search among news articles in Chinese from 2000 to 2013. The results indicates the number of Chinese news article mentioning each related words in full text, subject, title, and keywords.

**Table 4. Number of News Articles Mentioning Words Related to Delegitimation**

Word	By	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13
America's hegemony (美国霸权)	Full text	22	42	25	68	45	36	43	45	65	76	77	122	100	73
	Subject	2	13	1	8	2	3	7	7	6	11	9	13	48	30
	Title	0	11	0	6	1	2	1	1	2	5	2	3	2	4
	Keywords	3	7	1	9	2	5	8	7	9	17	22	46	46	26
American leadership (美国领导)	Full text	243	518	640	919	913	902	1042	1028	1101	2118	1355	2320	1068	747
	Subject	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	1	1	5	3	1	3	1
	Title	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	1	1	5	3	1	3	1
	Keywords	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New int'l order (国际新秩序)	Full text	15	11	8	23	16	19	11	11	23	53	39	25	17	28
	Subject	9	3	2	7	5	6	11	6	13	24	15	34	34	23
	Title	7	2	1	3	4	3	2	3	5	23	7	3	3	6
	Keywords	3	2	4	5	7	7	7	5	8	33	22	25	24	17
Reform int'l order (改革国际秩序)	Full text	0	1	2	11	9	10	6	4	12	24	16	18	24	20
	Subject	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	1	3	2	4
	Title	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	1	3	2	4
	Keywords	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: 中国知网 (www.cnki.net) Search Date: 2013/11/24

As seen in Table 4, all numbers increased sharply in 2009 compared to the previous year of 2008, except the figure of zero. Considering these words are related to the elements of delegitimation, China's delegitimation in 2009 is proved significantly valid, which is the same result with the qualitative research in the previous section through discourse analysis. What is noteworthy is the fact that except title search, the number of news articles mentioning America's hegemony hit the highest record since 2001 or at least restored the level of 2001, when America's hegemony or even the American empire was the issue of the international politics as concerns over the unilateralism of the U.S. government's response to the 9/11 attacks spread widely.

It is intriguing that China's delegitimation behavior was made in 2009, the year following the 2008 global financial crisis triggered by the collapse of the U.S. subprime

mortgage market. The 2008 financial crisis can be reasonably inferred to have played a precipitating role in creating or boosting China's delegitimation in two ways. On one hand, it might have boosted China's willingness to delegitimation as it was seen as a signal of intrinsic problem of the existing order designed by and benefitting the United States. The financial crisis posed the question of new leadership in the financial sector. Consequently, it also made the United States exert efforts to renew its leadership in other areas as well. The climate regime was the area in which president Obama made such efforts since the U.S. leadership in climate regime had been waned and relatively weak as of 2009 since it decided to stay out of the Kyoto regime. U.S. attempts to renew its leadership precipitated China's willingness to delegitimation to some extent. On the other, unlike developed economies like the EU and the United States, China made a comparatively quick recovery, which created a boost in China's capabilities, accelerating the material foundation of delegitimation.

#### 4.2 Sectoral differences in China's delegitimation in 2009

As seen from the previous section, the degree of China's delegitimation behavior in G20 Summits and in Copenhagen conference were different. By the search through CNKI database, we can see similar results confirming the discourse analysis in the previous section. When inserting the sector or order in combination of words related to delegitimation, we can have the following results in Table 5.

**Table 5. Number of News Articles Mentioning Words in Combination Related to Delegitimation**

Sector	Searched word in combination	CNKI result in 2009
Int'l Financial (国际金融)	+ Hegemony (霸权)	206
	+ Reform order (秩序改革)	6
Climate Change (气候变化)	+ Hegemony (霸权)	137
	+ Reform order (秩序改革)	4
Military (军事)	+ Hegemony (霸权)	2
	+ Reform order (秩序改革)	3

Source: 中国知网 (www.cnki.net) Search Date: 2013/11/24

The number of news articles mentioning words related to delegitimation in the international financial order is overwhelming, and the number in climate change order is smaller than that in the international financial order. This is in line with the previous discourse analysis, strong delegitimation in G20 Summits and weak delegitimation in Copenhagen. As we expected, the number of articles mentioning China's delegitimation in the military sector is negligible. The difference in occurrence or degree of delegitimation among different sectors gives intriguing points to be interpreted and gives some ideas on variables in determining delegitimation.

**Table 6. Sectoral Comparison Based on Levels of Elements of Delegitimation**

level	Elements	Finance	Climate Change	Military
Pre-condition	<b>US Legitimacy exists</b>	Yes	Not clear	Yes
	Order established/ In formation	Order established	Order in formation	Order established
	Leadership Owner	US	Old EU/ Newly US & China	US
System-level	<b>Demand for order reduced</b>	Yes	Yes	Ambiguous
	Preference for alternative order	Increasing	Increasing	-
	<b>Dispersion of power is initiated</b>	Initiated	Initiated	Not initiated
	A challenger possess capabilities	Yes	Yes	No
State-level	<b>Problematising</b>	Yes	Yes	No
	Inputting Negative info/systemic threat	Yes	Yes	-
	<b>Agenda-resetting</b>	Yes	Yes	No
	Clarifying the situation with new information	Yes	Yes	-
Occurrence		Event (Delegitimation)		Non-event (No Delegitimation)
Degree		Strong Delegitimation	Weak Delegitimation	

Source: Summed up by author

a. Delegitimation in Traditional vs. Non-traditional security areas

International finance and climate change belongs to non-traditional security areas in that they are more comprehensive than the military sector of in terms of “security for whom” and “security against which threat.” Compared to the military sector, where the objects of security and threat are states and military threat, those of security in non-traditional security area are extended to the individual level and, therefore, the challenges vary ranging from the financial crisis to climate change.

Considering their categorization, the result shows that the occurrence and non-

occurrence of delegitimation were determined by the difference in the traditional and non-traditional security area. As of 2009, delegitimation was an event in the non-traditional security area, while a non-event in traditional security area. The most important elements causing the difference in event and non-event seems to be the system-level elements, when applying John Stuart Mill's method of agreement and difference. Considering that it is hard to confirm whether the demand for order reduced in the military sector is highly ambiguous, whether power dispersion is initiated or not can be said to be the more direct element affecting the occurrence of delegitimation.

#### b. Delegitimation in Financial Order vs. Climate Change Regime

The degree of delegitimation in G20 Summits and Copenhagen can be seen as sectoral difference since each conference represents the financial regime and climate change regime respectively. When applying the method of agreement and difference, the difference in degree of delegitimation seems to come from the difference in the precondition element, which is how solid U.S. legitimacy was established as of 2009. When there is strong legitimacy established by the U.S., China can make strong delegitimation. On the contrary, when the order is under formation and U.S. legitimacy is weak, China cannot help but resort to weak legitimacy because there is no legitimacy strong enough to withdraw or negate.

#### c. Pattern of China's Delegitimation as of 2009

From the analysis, we can draw two implications for China's delegitimation in

2009. Firstly, for determining the occurrence of state-level delegitimation, which are problematization and agenda-resetting, the system-level elements need to be fulfilled. That is, dispersion of power should be made in a particular sector and demand for the existing order should be reduced as the preference for alternative order increases.

Secondly, once occurred, the pattern of state-level delegitimation behaviors of problematization and agenda-resetting are inferred to be affected by preconditions of how solid US legitimacy is established. Though it is hard to be said to have causal relations, at least a correlation can be recognized.

#### 4.3 Lessons for future U.S.-China relations

Amid prospects for power transition between the United States and China ever more increasing, China's delegitimation behaviors in G20 Summits and Copenhagen Climate Change Conference gives a certain lesson for future US-China relations. China's behavior is not merely assertive or outspoken. Once China's efforts are confirmed to be delegitimizing behavior, they must be interpreted as China's broad opposition to the order created by the United States, with China's own ideas and designs for a new order.

The fact that China's delegitimation has already begun should be paid sufficient attention, given its cascading effects in the systemic cycle once it is begun. This means that the international system has already entered the delegitimation phase, which poses the need to see the U.S.-China relations in a systemic context. As Modelski's long cycle

shows, when the U.S. supply of the order decreases, China's delegitimation can be developed into the deconcentration phase, the next phase in the long cycle. Actually, in the financial order, China is creating a coalition with BRICs countries in urging the adoption of supra-sovereignty currency. If it is further accompanied by the U.S.'s inability in supplying the order in the international monetary system, it can be seen in terms of the deconcentration phase.

## **5. Suggestions for Future Studies**

Based on findings and implications of this research, operationalizing delegitimation by extracting key variables seems to be possibly meaningful study in the future. By extending the number of cases and areas, under what conditions China's delegitimation is more likely to be made can be confirmed through studies.

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

The results of the study are as follows. First, China's behavior has delegitimized the United States and the U.S.-dominated order in the G20 Summits and the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. Second, the degree of delegitimation in the two areas were different; delegitimation was strong at the G20 Summits and weaker at the Copenhagen Conference. These results offer intriguing implications on the pattern of China's delegitimation in terms of occurrence and degree, as can be seen through the temporal significance of the year 2009 and sectoral differences in occurrence and degree of delegitimation.

The results of this study contribute to the growing body of research on the U.S.-China relationship, which has been mainly examined within the frameworks of power transition or balance of power. With delegitimation, China's recent outspoken and proactive behavior can be viewed in a broader context of the systemic change beyond a mere assertive expression of its national interests. Analyzing China's behavior through the framework of legitimacy and delegitimation allows a reinterpretation of China's apparent inaction and non-events in the currently shifting international order into action and events.

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## 국문 초록

### 미패권의 정통성 흠집내기:

2009년 G20 정상회의와 코펜하겐 기후변화회의에서  
미국에 대한 중국의 비정통화 시도에 관한 연구

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오늘날 미국 중심의 단극질서는 힘의 상대적 배분상의 변화를 겪고 있다. 이러한 변화는 미국에 대한 힘의 균형화나 국가들간 연합이 가능한 정도에는 미치지 못하는 못하나, 미국주도의 현실서에 대항하는 대안적 질서에 대한 요구가 제기될 수준에는 이르렀다. 이와 같은 국제정치 현실은 현 미중간 경쟁관계를 개념적으로 정의하는 문제와 중국의 행위를 가장 잘 포착할 수 있는 권력 이외의 대안적 틀에 대한 필요성을 제기한다.

따라서 본 논문은 비정통화 개념을 분석틀로 사용하여 미국과 미국중심의 국제질서에 대항하는 중국의 행위를 설명하는 것을 목적으로 한다. 그간 국제관계연구의 권력중심적 편향성으로 인해서 정통성과 비정통화에 대한 연구는 많지 않다. 그 결과 비정통화에 대한 통합적 연구가 부족한 실정이며, 일국의 행위를 분석할 만한 틀로서 기능할 수 있는 수준에 미치지 못하

고 있다. 이러한 맹점을 보완하기 위해 본 논문은 모델스키의 장주기이론상의 비정통화 단계를 바탕으로 비정통화에 대한 분석틀로서의 운용화를 시도하고, 이를 적용하여 중국의 최근 행태를 분석하였다. 이를 위해 미중간 국력의 격차를 급격하게 줄였다고 평가되는 2008년 금융위기 이듬해인 2009년에 G20 정상회의와 코펜하겐 기후변화회의에서의 중국의 행태를 분석대상으로 하는 사례연구가 이루어졌다.

분석의 주요결과는 다음과 같다. 첫째, 중국은 2009년 G20 정상회의와 코펜하겐 기후변화회의에서 미국과 미국중심의 질서에 대한 비정통화를 시도했음이 드러났다. 둘째, 비정통화는 G20 정상회의에서 강하게 나타났던 것과 달리 코펜하겐 회의에서는 약하게 나타나는 등 두 영역에서 비정통화의 정도는 상이했다. 이러한 결과는 특히 2009년이라는 시기적 중요성과 발생 및 정도에서 나타난 영역간 상이성을 고려할 경우, 비정통화의 발생여부 및 정도에 있어서 중국의 비정통화 행위의 패턴을 이해하는데 있어서 흥미로운 함의를 제시한다.

본 연구의 결과는 세력전이나 힘의 균형이라는 틀에 편향된 미중관계 연구의 시각을 넓히는데 일정 기여할 것으로 사료된다. 또한 정통성과 비정통화 연구는 부작위(不作爲)와 비(非)사건으로 보일 수 있는 중국의 행태를 일종의 작위(作爲)와 사건으로 이해할 수 있는 일종의 분석틀을 제시해줄 수 있을 것으로 기대된다.

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**주요어:** 비정통화, 정통성흠집내기, 중국, 미중관계, G20 정상회의, 코펜하겐  
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