

2021

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Recommended Citation

Jia, Zhao (2021) "Chinese Approach to Improving Global Governance," *Contemporary Social Sciences*: No. 3, Article 5.

Available at: <https://css.researchcommons.org/journal/vol2021/iss3/5>

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Chinese Approach to Improving Global Governance

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Abstract: Today's world is facing profound changes rarely seen in a century and the traditional global governance mechanism has lost its ability to effectively cope with these changes. Innovations in the models of global governance and improving global governance mechanisms are now necessary for the continuation of positive global development. Over the past 40 years of reform and opening up, China has proven its ability to continuously improve its ability to participate in global governance reforms and will continue to do so by contributing Chinese vision, Chinese experience, and Chinese approaches to the improvement of global governance.

Keywords: global governance, Chinese vision, Chinese experience, Chinese approach

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.19873/j.cnki.2096-0212.2021.03.004>

Global governance refers to “the new model of global rules and systems dealing with international political and economic issues in the era of globalization” (Shao, 2010, p. 46). For national governance and good governance at the international level, there are traditionally two major governance models in the world: “One is a capital-centric governance model represented by the UK and the US, which pins the governance functions mainly on market forces; the other is a state-centered governance model represented by France and Germany, which maintains reliance on highly efficient national administrative capabilities while implementing the reasonable division of labor between the state and society” (Wang & Zhang,

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2020). However, neither the capital-centric governance model nor the state-centered governance model can completely control, and/or stop, such world chaos functions as extreme nationalism, populism, international financial crisis, and refugee flows. The world today is facing profound changes rarely seen in a century with various old and new contradictions intertwined and intensified protectionism and deglobalization. Thus, innovations in the concepts of global governance and improving the mechanisms necessary to realize improvements have become inevitable for continued positive global development.

Chinese Vision Can Improve Global Governance

At present, the international community is caught in governance deficits, the global governance order is full of contradictions, and the global governance system and multilateral mechanisms are being stressed to the point of disfunction. President Xi Jinping pointed out at the World Economic Forum Virtual Event of the Davos Agenda, “To uphold multilateralism in the 21st century, we should promote its fine tradition, take on new perspectives and look to the future. We need to stand by the core values and basic principles of multilateralism. We also need to adapt to the changing international landscape and respond to global challenges as they arise. We need to reform and improve the global governance system on the basis of extensive consultation and consensus-building” (Xi, 2021). This is a profound statement on how China has constantly innovated in global governance concepts and demonstrated the Chinese vision.

We advocate adhering to the principle of achieving shared growth through discussion and collaboration. Ideas precede and influence actions. In today’s world, all countries are more interdependent than ever, and the connections of their interests have been increasingly expanded. Adhering to the principle of achieving shared growth through discussion and collaboration is both theoretical speculation in dealing with the imbalance of the global governance system and an important principle for China’s foreign exchanges. From the three dimensions of direction, means, and effects, adherence to the global governance concept of extensive consultations, joint contributions and shared benefits is the Chinese approach for active advancement in the reform and construction of the global governance system. “Discussion” means all countries are welcomed to gather a wide range of opinions for joint consultations in their participation in global governance, use collective wisdom to resolve contradictions in the process of international exchanges and develop deep mutual trust in the process. “Collaboration” means that all sides in the international exchanges and cooperation are required to give a full play to their strengths and potentials, to develop and increase common interests through cooperation and co-construction. “Shared growth” suggests that with the development of economic globalization, all countries will have increasingly close ties and thus become an indivisible community of interests, and they, therefore, should enjoy equal development opportunities. Adherence to the global governance concept of extensive consultations, joint contributions, and shared benefits will allow people of all countries to benefit from the construction of the improved global governance

system more widely and in a reasonable way. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, China has continued to play its role as a responsible major country, uphold the global governance principle of achieving shared growth through discussion and collaboration, seek for a fair play, inspire trust in the international community, and advocate the democratization of international relations. By doing so, it has devoted itself to improving international relations in a fairer, equal, and democratic direction.

Promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. The promotion of building a community with a shared future for mankind is a sign of the Chinese vision for innovation in global governance concepts and the improvement of global governance mechanisms. Innovation in the concept of global governance aims at achieving good global governance, and a community with a shared future for mankind is a theoretical attempt to solve international problems through Chinese thinking. These have provided a benchmark in the sense of a strategic concept for good global governance. To build a community of shared future for mankind, as President Xi Jinping pointed out in a speech at the United Nations Office at Geneva in January 2017, “The international community should promote partnership, security, growth, inter-civilization exchanges and the building of a sound ecosystem” (Xi, 2017). As the overall train of thought for building a better world, the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind is based on a good vision of human society, which features security, development, stability, and good governance, and requires all of the mankind to work together to realize common development and revitalization. The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind has distinct contents in comparison with the Western notion of global governance: the former advocates the concept of commonalities, that is, “common development, common security, and a shared better future,” and pursues the common value of all mankind including “peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom.” The most important features of the concept of the building of a community with a shared future for mankind are its respect for equal relationships among states, nations, and civilizations, and its pursuit of a common goal for mankind through adherence to the common concept of equality as its spiritual core. Therefore, we must unremittingly promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind to guide the innovation in global governance concepts, and constantly emphasize extensive consultations, joint contributions, and shared benefits as the principle of global governance. In this way, we will build a world featuring “lasting peace, universal security, common prosperity, openness and inclusiveness, and cleanness and beauty” from the five aspects of politics, security, economy, culture, and ecology, and realize the transformation of the global governance order.

We should continue to uphold justice and friendship and pursue shared interests. *The Analects of Confucius* says, “The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain” (Confucius, 2015, p. 49). The correct concept of justice and interests is the deep-rooted principle of morality and behavior in traditional Chinese culture, requiring people to observe morality and justice in their everyday behaviors. In this view, one should keep “justice” in mind without ignoring the role of “interests,” for “the critical point for government is to perform righteousness with rites, yield benefits with righteousness, and comfort people with

benefits” (Wang, 1957, pp. 248-249). The Communist Party of China has inherited the Chinese cultural gene that features the unity of justice and interests and always upheld justice and friendship and pursued shared interest. By doing so, it has firmly stuck to the spiritual source of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation without any interval and put up a new banner of world diplomatic cooperation. To uphold justice and friendship and pursue shared interest, we are required in the new situation to “seek a balance between patriotism and internationalism, and between Chinese people’s interests and the benefits of all the other peoples in the world and to make progress in the win-win interactions between China and all other countries” (Wang, 2013). Moreover, the adherence to the correct concept of justice and interests can be applied as the underlying principle for China’s interactions with neighboring or developing countries, and the bottom line of China’s interactions with developed ones. In terms of specific approaches, we must politically oppose hegemonism, power politics, and neo-interventionism, and economically adhere to the cornerstone of mutual benefit, win-win and common development. Only by doing so can we achieve the sustainable development of peaceful and friendly exchanges between countries. Upholding justice and friendship and pursuing a shared interest is not only a proper response to the epochal trend of “peace, development, cooperation, and win-win,” but reveals the commitment of China to be a responsible major country in the world.

Chinese Experience in Improving Global Governance

United Nations Charter stipulates that “To maintain international peace and security; To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace; To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.” With this purpose and these principles, the international community has established an international order and system that follows the norm of maintaining peace, security and justice, and then formulated various rules and regulations for the international community to promote friendly exchanges between countries. As global challenges increase and injustices occur in the international community, the guidelines and principles of United Nations Charter have not yet been effectively implemented, and strengthening global governance and boosting the reform of the global governance system have become a general trend. Faced with this situation, China is actively participating in the reform of the global governance system and is applying its own experiences to improving global governance.

In the field of economics, it has been strengthening the reform of the global economic governance system and establishing a mechanism for the enhancement of the coordination of international macroeconomic policies. China’s promotion of the reform of the global economic governance system aims to make the international order more open and more effective. As developing countries have

constantly improved their levels of economic development in the progress of world history, the old order of international economic exchanges has turned out to be infested with unfairness and unreasonableness, and it has become inevitable to establish a new international economic order that conforms to the laws of economic development and reflects the levels of economic development. President Xi Jinping pointed out at the General Debate of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2010, “We should strike a proper balance between the government and the market, fairness and efficiency, growth and income distribution, and technology and employment so as to ensure full and balanced development that delivers benefit to people from all countries, sectors and backgrounds in an equitable way” (Xi, 2020a). China as a representative of the developing countries is active in striving for its rights and interests. It not only benefits the world through its achievements of economic development in the form of assisting developing countries but strengthens infrastructure construction in Asia through the establishment of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, trying hard to push forward innovation in the order of international economic exchanges.

With respect to politics, China has been driving the order of global governance towards a fairer and more reasonable direction. The order of international political exchanges is essentially wrestling between countries in terms of economic strength. Traditional mechanisms for international political and economic governance have revealed the rivalry for worldwide power and interests between developed countries, and developing countries will certainly be absent or have insufficient participation in any potential reforms. For emerging markets and developing countries, it is a critical requirement to take an active part in global governance to achieve equal global exchanges and increase their global recognition and voice. In this regard, China has established itself on South-South cooperation, focusing on practical cooperation, and actively building the new order of global governance for fair and reasonable development. The attempts to strengthen the unity and cooperation of developing countries and enhance political discourse power, including “Forum on China–Africa Cooperation” and the Belt and Road Initiative, have provided the possibility for rulemaking for the construction of a new platform for more effective, fairer and more reasonable global governance.

With respect to climate, China has been urging international cooperation to address climate changes on some common but meanwhile different bases. China’s active participation in the reform of the global governance system is also shown through its efforts to address climate changes and promote green and low-carbon development. We have domestically strengthened the construction of a socialist ecological civilization and China has continuously increased its investments in the construction of this socialist ecological civilization from the aspects of energy conservation, emissions reductions, prevention of water pollution, and the protection and restoration of the ecological project. China has also internationally promoted the establishment of a fair, reasonable, cooperative and win-win global climate governance system. President Xi Jinping pointed out at Climate Ambition Summit in December 2020, “China always honors its commitments. Guided by our new development

philosophy, we will promote greener economic and social development in all respects while pursuing high-quality development. We will take solid steps to implement the targets just announced, and contribute even more to tackling the global climate challenge” (Xi, 2020b). China has been active in promoting the new train of thought about the improvement of the global climate in recent years, with its measures and successes following: entering the negotiations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to engage and explain China’s voice in the negotiations on global climate change; actively promoting the signing of the Paris Agreement to enhance China’s power of discourse in the improvement of the global climate; carrying out South-South cooperation to provide technological and financial support for developing countries to deal with climate changes. Through its pioneering efforts at the domestic level and its proactive actions in the international community, China has gradually become a major participant in the improvement of international climate and has accumulated rich Chinese experience.

Chinese Approach to Improving Global Governance

All scientific ideas should have a positive practical impetus. The Chinese approach to improving global governance starts with the concrete practice of formulating scientific governance rules and improving global governance mechanisms.

The Formulation of Scientific Governance Rules

“Rules and institutional arrangements are the core of global governance and determine the status and role of a country in global governance” (Wang, 2018, p. 31). The formulation of scientific governance rules is a prerequisite for the improvement of governance concepts and the establishment of governance mechanisms. China is not making a fresh start by rejecting the past when it takes part in global governance and promotes the reform of the global governance order; instead, it innovates in the existing governance mechanism based on the balance of power and responsibility, to reflect the wishes and interests of all countries in the world more fairly, especially of emerging markets and the developing countries. In this regard, global governance should adhere to the global governance rules of peaceful development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom based on the governance concept of extensive consultations, joint contributions, and shared benefits. This can be elaborated as follows. First, we must adhere to the principle of peaceful development. Peaceful development is the very premise and goal for China for all domestic and international tasks. Following the global rules of peaceful development and expanding the shared interests of China and other countries in the world is conducive to solving the predicament of global governance and then constructing a new global governance system. Second, we must uphold the principles of fairness and justice. Fairness and justice are pursued by all mankind. To improve global governance, we must insist that all countries, whether large or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, have the right to equally enjoy the various achievements of human development. This is the core of China’s approach to the improvement of global governance.

Third, we must adhere to the rules of democracy and freedom. The democratization of international relations is an irresistible trend of the times, and it is a law of historical development to steer the rules of global governance in the direction of more democracy and freedom. Adhering to the global governance rule of democracy and freedom is a critical point in China's efforts for the improvement of global governance.

The Specific Practice to Improve Global Governance Mechanisms

The conceptual innovation, experience accumulation, and rulemaking to improve global governance all should point to positive governance practices, as follows. First, to attach paramount importance to the role of the United Nations, actively support the reforms in the UN, and maintain the UN's core position in global governance. President Xi Jinping pointed out at the G20 Leaders' Summit, "The UN is the core institution for addressing international affairs through cooperation. All countries should firmly support the UN's authority and standing, follow the purposes and principles of its Charter, and uphold the international order underpinned by international law" (Xi, 2020c). In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, the UN is displaying a more important role as a core mechanism for dealing with international affairs. Second, to continuously strengthen the role of global organizations for overall planning and control, actively support traditional international organizations to play their important part, facilitate the mechanisms of the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank for the settlement of trade disputes, and afford more protections for the rights of developing countries, and continuously expand the liberalization of global trade. At the same time, it is useful to actively encourage emerging organizations to enhance the driving force of regional development, actively impel the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation to achieve new progress and play a more active part in promoting regional economic and political development. Third, to establish an effective mechanism for worldwide communications and collaboration, require the G20 to consolidate and play its role as a basic framework for global governance, and improve the communication channels for developed and developing countries to coordinate and maintain the world economic and political order. Fourth, to attach importance to the abilities of emerging countries, especially developing countries, to promote world development. It is useful to actively support the institutionalization of the BRICS platform and help the BRICS countries to play a greater role in establishing a fairer and more reasonable world order. Fifth, to pay attention to the sustainable development of mankind and nature. It is advisable to cooperate with the international community on global problems such as climate change, network security, terrorism, and major disasters to cope with crises that can affect all mankind. Sixth, to actively speak out and offer Chinese approaches to the world. It is necessary to further enhance China's ability to participate in global governance, cultivate a group of high-quality comprehensive talents with high professional skills and strong professionalism, and provide sufficient talent support for China to participate in global governance and improve global governance mechanisms.

Conclusion

The reform of the global governance mechanisms advocated by China “does not refer to the maintenance of the existing global governance system and world economic order, but means that China expects the international community to reform global governance and rebuild the world economic order as a response to the real challenges that existing global institutions, especially international financial institutions, are experiencing and because of which they are unable to meet the requirements of global governance in the 21st century” (Pang, 2016, p. 4). Therefore, the Chinese approach to improving global governance is essentially the profound innovation of revising the mechanisms for global governance so that they develop in the direction of increased fairness and equality through reform rather than replacement. With respect to this, foreign scholars have expressed a growing recognition. For example, Ross Terrill, a research associate at Harvard University’s Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies states in *Xi Jinping’s China Renaissance: Historical Mission and Great Power Strategy*, that China is undertaking increasingly important international responsibilities and providing two equally significant public products for the world: One is to boost the construction of benign and friendly new international order aiming at the promotion of world peace and development, and the other is to provide as much as possible substantial support for developing countries utilizing the good governance of China itself (Communist Party Members Website, 2016); and Professor Alan Mcfarlane, a well-known British scholar and a Fellow of the British Academy points out that people are all endeavoring to build a more secure and united world. That is the magic of the Chinese dream. It is not only the dream of China, but also the vision of the world, and the prospect of the whole of mankind (CRI Online, 2019). Overseas political parties have thought highly of Chinese governance likewise, believing that Chinese governance has provided an exemplary Chinese approach for the world. For instances, Khamphanh Phommathath, Politburo member, Secretary of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party Central Committee holds that the Chinese conception has made considerable contributions to the peaceful development of the world; Bjornar Selnes Skjaeran, Deputy Leader of the Norwegian Labor Party has expressed his wish to learn from the Chinese experience; and Mouddour Ismael, vice-chairman of the youth organization of the Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism thinks highly of the development of China, expecting to combine the characteristics of the Chinese model with the cultural tradition of his own country (Xinhuanet, 2019). These are proof that the Chinese conception and proposition about global governance are increasingly being recognized worldwide.

Innovations and improvements in the mechanisms of global governance are the essential elements needed to promote the reform of global governance and provide fundamental guidance for the establishment of a new global governance order. China, as a major force in global governance reform, will continue to increase its participation in the formulation of global governance rules, constantly improving its ability to conduct overall coordination, and make continuous efforts to contribute Chinese vision, experience, and approaches to the improvement of global governance.



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(Editor: Xiong Xianwei)