

Southern Illinois University Carbondale
OpenSIUC

Honors Theses

University Honors Program

5-10-2014

Revisionist Economic Prebalancers and Status Quo Bandwagoners: Understanding the Behavior of Great Powers in Unipolar Systems

Benjamin W. Campbell

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, benjamin.w.campbell@siu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/uhp_theses

Recommended Citation

Campbell, Benjamin W., "Revisionist Economic Prebalancers and Status Quo Bandwagoners: Understanding the Behavior of Great Powers in Unipolar Systems" (2014). *Honors Theses*. Paper 367.

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the University Honors Program at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact opensiuc@lib.siu.edu.

Revisionist Economic Prebalancers and Status Quo Bandwagoners:
Understanding the Behavior of Great Powers in Unipolar Systems

Benjamin Campbell

A thesis submitted to the University Honors Program in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors Degree

Southern Illinois University

30 April, 2014

Recently international relations scholarship has increased its focus on the behavior of great powers in the unipolar system created by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Recently, scholars have argued that there is a “unipolar threshold”, wherein a state acquires so much power, both in influence and material capabilities, that states are dissuaded from balancing and engage in a form of bandwagoning (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008; Fiammenghi 2011). Since Brooks and Wohlforth’s (2008) groundbreaking work, “unipolar realism” has received scholarly attention. While structural theories have emphasized the distribution of power in the past (Waltz 1979), there is a move towards adapting previous theories to account for the new structural variable of unipolarity.

While adaptation of theories to new structural conditions is important, many scholars have generalized the behavior of all states in a unipolar system. This is a problematic essentialization that does not account for the nuance of the international system. It is this generalization that is the focus of my research. To analyze the structural impact of unipolarity upon great powers, I pose the following research questions:

- 1. In unipolarity, do great powers challenge the status quo structure?*
- 2. What determines the strategies that great powers pursue in unipolar systems?*
- 3. If great powers challenge the unipolar structure, what strategy decisions do they make?*

My research will examine these questions, and proceed by introducing a two-variable model for understanding great power decision-making. Fundamentally, my argument will hold that there are two variables that impact strategy outcomes. The first independent variable

evaluated is the intention of each state, whether or not the great power in question is a status quo power, or a revisionist power. My second independent variable is whether or not the state has the latent power resources, material capabilities, to challenge the unipolar system in the short-run or if they must act to increase their latent power resources in the long-run.

This paper will proceed in four sections. Section I will provide a review of the literature and made when answering my research questions. Section II will provide an introduction to my theory and an explanation of important concepts, as well as the methodology utilized. Section III will provide a test case to demonstrate my theory, specifically, the current American-led unipolar system beginning in 1991 following the collapse of the Soviet Union. In Section IV, the paper will conclude and will be a discussion of the significance of this work and a research agenda.

I. Literature Review

Waltz (1979) argues that the structure of international relations incentivizes the balancing of power. He holds that there is a parabolic relationship between power and balancing, as states increase their security they become more secure up to a point. Past a certain threshold, however, a state becomes less secure as it provokes arms increases and countervailing coalitions. For Waltz, unipolarity would likely not play a role, and in fact, observers should expect a great deal of balancing against the United States.

Walt (1985) argues that states do not simply balance power, but make calculations based upon the threat that other states pose. For Walt, there are four different threat variables: aggregate power, proximity, offensive capability, and offensive intentions. Given consideration of each of these variables, the United States should be perceived as a threat given the great deal

of offensive power and capability that it possesses, and has demonstrated in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. As a result, we would expect a great deal of balancing against the United States.

Walt (2005) later argued that given American power, states have had to develop strategies to specifically deal with American power. Walt holds that the way the United States exercises its power has produced a great deal of resentment, even amongst its allies, and as a result, states have pursued strategies of opposition (71, 110).

Mearsheimer (2001) argues that great powers are generally revisionist states, as the incentives for security competition and relative gains are too high. This theory, offensive realism, holds that the only way a state can achieve security is through becoming a hegemon, meaning that all states will strive to increase their own security (2001, 21). Specifically, Mearsheimer (2001) indicates that states should seek to revise the current balance of power in a way that benefits them (37). If Mearsheimer's argument were true, given the sheer disparity of power in unipolarity, we should expect balancing to occur at unprecedented levels. Mearsheimer acknowledges that once a state achieves hegemony, anarchy ceases to exist and the system comes to be hierarchical; as a result, offensive realism loses its explanatory power (415). Mearsheimer, however, fails to acknowledge that the current system is hegemonic (41). If it is true that the current system is unipolar, then Mearsheimer's evaluation of great power politics is irrelevant.

Pape (2005) challenges the conventional wisdom, that while other states may grumble about American military policy states will inevitably fall in line (8). Pape, among other scholars including T.V. Paul holds that states are engaging in "soft balancing" against the United States, which is to say, states are utilizing nonmilitary tools to constrain the United States (10; Paul 2005). Soft balancing generally occurs through international institutions, economic statecraft,

and diplomatic forums (10). Pape argues that these forms of balancing are likely to become more intense if the United States were to continue acting unilaterally (10). Pape argues that internal balancing is not a viable strategy against a unipolar leader because it would be insufficient to create parity (15). As a consequence, Pape argues that states must pursue external balancing and must coalesce to challenge the hegemon (16). This is where soft balancing becomes important, as otherwise collective action problems would harm the formation of balancing coalitions (16). Pape argues that soft balancing allows a way to overcome these collective action problems by establishing cooperation and trust (16-17).

Lieber and Alexander (2005) seek to understand why there has been a lack of balancing against the United States, while also arguing that soft balancing is not truly oppositional balancing. Lieber and Alexander make a strong case for why soft balancing is less impactful than many scholars may hold, arguing that it is difficult to define and is no different from normal diplomatic friction. Lieber and Alexander hold that the post-September 11th strategy of the United States does not alienate powerful states nor America's allies, but generally rogue regimes and terrorist groups. In addition, they hold that since September 11th, the positive relations between the United States and many other regional powers has been sustainable (Lieber and Alexander 2005).

Glaser (2010) answers this question with uncertainty over how great powers should react to American power. Glaser says holds that there would be three independent variables conditioning how great powers would act: motives, material capability, and information (35-38). Later, however, Glaser attributes information and material conditions as contributing to the post-Cold War European peace (213). Glaser argues that the reason why Northeast Asia has been insecure, even given that they have many of the same material conditions as Europe, is that there

is a difference of intention: there is a lack of trust and fear of Chinese expansionism (218).

While his book does not make clear how states act in regards to American hegemony, it is likely he would argue that the current peace is a result of the benign, status quo intentions of the United States.

Brooks and Wohlforth's (2008) thesis is that the concentration of power in a unipolar system, and in particular, the current system, renders inoperable many of the constraints that international relations scholars isolate as important (3). This is what some have referenced as "unipolar realism" (Fiammenghi 2011, 127). Scholars would traditionally think that raising power would translate to raising constraints, however, that is not what has occurred (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008, 10).

Accounting for changes in international relations literature, Fiammenghi seeks to provide a new understanding of the security curve. Conventionally, international relations scholarship would hold that a state becomes secure as it increases its power (Fiammenghi 2011). This occurs until states reach the "security threshold", which is Waltz's argument that at a certain point states become so powerful that they become less secure as states balance against them. This is the conventional understanding of the parabolic nature of the security curve. Fiammenghi's (2011) contribution is that there is an "absolute security threshold" in which a state's power becomes so large that balancing "becomes impossible" (136). This is meant as the application of Brooks and Wohlforth's "unipolar realism". Where Fiammenghi's argument diverges from Brooks and Wohlforth's is that states pursue bandwagoning with a state that has crossed the absolute security threshold, indicating in the current system the rational decision for states is to bandwagon with the United States (Fiammenghi 2011, 136-138). While perhaps being its strength, the

generality of Fiammenghi's argument is also its fault. While seeking to create an argument that is generalizable, he does not discuss how different tiers of states react.

Layne (2006) argues that traditional understandings of hard balancing are not relevant in a unipolar system, and argues that there has instead been "leash-slipping" (29-30). Conceptually, "leash-slipping" is a strategy whereby states act to provide a buffer against themselves and the hegemon so that they may act independently of the will of the hegemon, to have their own, distinct foreign policy (30).

Braumoeller (2012) argues for a systemic theory of international relations, holding that balance of power is shaped by the environment that impacts states' behavior, and that states would act to alter their environment. His theory would argue that outcomes are a result of the structure of the international system and the units that make it up (xiv). Braumoeller holds that the desire of each state largely impacts whether or not there will be an equitable distribution of power in a given system (52-53). Adjusting his model, he reveals that power distributions vary even more significantly when the latent power capabilities of states differ as well (53). He also argues that that role of constituencies, and their interest and desire to maintain equitable power distribution is important (55).

Lake (2009) argues that international relations is not absolutely anarchic, but there are systems of hierarchy based upon legitimacy and power (10). Lake argues that when the hierarchy is legitimate and is perceived to uphold the political order, states are willing to give up a portion of their sovereignty (138). In this instance, states legitimate the dominate state's power and authority through bandwagoning in symbolic measure (139). Likewise, if a dominate state is not seen as legitimate or acting to uphold the political order, then that state may be challenged (92).

Levy and Thompson (2010) contend that the United States' status as a naval and economic power is the reason there has been very little balancing against the United States (40). Levy and Thompson's argument is that there is a distinction between the balancing of Europe that is often the evidence used for balance of power theory and the new transregional maritime system that exists now (Levy and Thompson 2010, 8).

Schweller (2011) provides an interesting discussion of the way unipolar realists discuss constructivism and international legitimacy. For Schweller, states that balance under unipolarity will be considered a revisionist power, and thus, labeled an aggressor. As a result, in order for balancing to occur, states must delegitimize the unipole. This process of delegitimization extends beyond soft balancing, but also includes criticizing the existing system while providing a blueprint for the new system (Schweller 2011, 180). Once the unipole has become delegitimized, states view balancing as a good that replaces an unfavorable system. This would increase the benefit of pursuing strategies that would restrain the ability of the unipole to exercise its power, as states would see it as essential for state security. This would resolve the prohibitive cost that states face when opting for strategies of opposition against the unipole. Schweller (2011) argues given disparities in economic growth, with much of that coming from challengers, unipolarity will inevitably end.

Brawley (2004) argues for the inclusion of economic components of balancing, bandwagoning, and buck-passing to be included into existing international relations theory. In Brawley's model, two independent variables that impact state decision making calculus. For Brawley, the ability to rapidly transform wealth into power, and availability of allies determines the strategies that states may pursue (87). There is also a great consideration of time horizons for his argument, as he differentiates between the decision to balance now or to balance later. In

Brawley's conceptualization, states like Russia and China should be bandwagoning or appeasing the United States, and countries like Germany and France should be buck-passing. This does not seem to truly capture the picture, and requires more interrogation.

Brawley's discussion is perhaps the most important for this paper, as it establishes the importance of time horizons and political economy to discussions of unipolarity. The key distinction between Brawley's work, and this thesis, is that I change his models by changing one variable (availability of alliances changes to status quo or revisionist intentions), and modify another (rapid transformation of wealth into power changes to latent power capacity). This distinction will be discussed to greater length in the following section of the paper.

This survey of the literature related to state strategy reveals two startling gaps. First, there is little consideration paid to the implication of time horizon calculations, and there is certainly no discussion of how that plays into the revisionist or status quo intentions of a great power. Second, little work is done in explaining why some great powers are pursuing bandwagoning as a strategy, and why some are not bandwagoning, nor engaging in conventional forms of balancing. This creates a space for my theory distinguishing the motivation for distinct strategy choices, and an explanation for the recent phenomena of "economic prebalancing".

II: Theory and Method

As discussed in the introduction, my argument will evaluate the relationship between two independent variables upon the strategies that great powers pursue in unipolar systems. The first independent variable will analyze the intention of the great power being considered. Intention, according to Glaser (2010), stands in opposition to motive which are the inherent features of states, what motivates them, while intention focuses upon what a state intends to do based upon

the interaction of a state within the international system – in this instance, unipolarity (39). This conceptual distinction is essential given that this paper will focus upon unipolar international systems, which should condition state intention.

The intention variable will be dichotomous, in this instance, a state will either be labeled as a “Status Quo Power” or a “Revisionist Power”. In addition, a state’s intention will be measured by sentiment, coming from high level government officials, specifically criticizing the power disparity that exists in the international system. Certainly, scholars may address concerns over how a state can be classified as a status quo state or a revisionist power. These concerns may be valid, however, I will seek to resolve them in this work. If a state engages consistently in a form of international shaming of a state that behaves out of lines with international norms, than the state may be measured as a status quo power. On the other hand, if a state by and large is shamed for breaking international norms then it can be classified as revisionist.

The second variable analyzed by this paper is the ability of the great power to challenge the unipolar system in the short term through a build-up of military power and material capabilities. Brawley (2004) began this discussion by including time horizons into the consideration of state strategy decisions. This variable will largely be measured by whether or not the state has the material capabilities or latent power resources to challenge the unipolar system in the short-run, or if they must increase their economic capabilities to challenge the hegemon in the long-run.

Conventionally, economics literature defines the short-run as a time frame that is not long enough to allow for the change to certain economic conditions that a decision maker may face (Mabry and Ulbrich 1989). Alternatively, the long-run is defined as a time frame that is long enough for all important information and choices to be made available to the decision maker

(Mabry and Ulbrich 1989). Given that at the core of my argument rests strategy, constraints, and rational decision-making, these definitions seem best suited to provide a measurement for the power capabilities independent variable.

Given these two dichotomous variables, intention and capabilities, there is a two by two matrix of great power strategy outcomes provided (as demonstrated by Figure 1):

Figure 1: Great Power Strategy Outcomes

		Power Capabilities	
		Short-Run	Long-Run
Intention of the State	Revisionist	Hard Balancing	Economic Prebalancing
	Status Quo	No Balancing	Bandwagoning

Revisionist and Capable Hard Balancers

Hard balancing can be conceptualized as a state increasing its military capabilities in order to bring the international distribution of power into balance (Walt 2005, 120). Hard internal balancing is the act of mobilizing resources in a way to increase its own power relative to another. The variation would be hard external balancing, in which it was combining its capabilities with another to challenge a state. As demonstrated by Figure 1, a great power that is a revisionist state, capable of challenging the unipolar structure in the short term should pursue a strategy of hard balancing against the unipole. This is consistent with many theories within international relations, and specifically those provided by Mearsheimer (2001) and Waltz (1979). The logic is simple, if a state has the power resources to revise the system, and has the intention of revising the system, then it is likely the great power would pursue a strategy meant to

constrain the unipolar and strive for power parity (both in terms of material capabilities and influence).

However as Brooks and Wohlforth (2008) noted a structural condition of unipolarity is that other states in the system cannot choose to pursue balancing-related strategies because they do not have the capability to challenge the unipole in a meaningful way. The logical conclusion of this argument is that in unipolarity, revisionist states can only focus upon long-run time horizon considerations because the power disparity is so large it is extremely difficult to overcome. This is an important note for the remainder of the paper, which will focus primarily upon what I call “Revisionist Economic Prebalancers” and “Status Quo Bandwagoners” – the only true strategy choices in my theory.

Status Quo and Capable Non-Balancers

If a great power is content with the status quo power structure, but capable of engaging in balancing behavior, then we would expect that states pursue a strategy of ambivalence and non-balancing. In this instance, a state might be more willing to utilize wealth to increase the quality of life for its citizens than to spend their money on military armaments. The decision to not balance would simply be measured in the same way balancing was, but to code the incident as “non-balancing” as opposed to “balancing” if it was not present.

However, as noted above, this is an unlikely strategy outcome under unipolarity given that great powers do not have the resources to revise the international system in the first place, or to provide for their own security against the hegemon. As a result, we would expect that status quo great powers would pursue policies of bandwagoning with the unipole to best provide for their security.

Revisionist and Incapable Economic Prebalancers

If a great power seeks to revise the international structure, but is unable to do so in the short-run, then they will likely pursue strategies to increase their capability that will not provoke backlash by the hegemon. This strategy has been referred to as “economic prebalancing”, and has received some scholarly attention. However, Browley (2004) does not include intention as an independent variable for determining strategy outcomes. Economic prebalancing is conceptualized as a strategy intended to have increased growth rates through prioritizing economic growth over military expenditures with the intention of reaching economic parity with the unipole.

Economic prebalancing is measured by the decision to devote economic resources to the development of domestic infantile industries as opposed to investing in international industries where the returns would be more immediate. That is not to say that an economic prebalancer would not pursue free trade policies with the unipole, but only when it would receive larger relative gains. This strategy rests upon the assumption that economic resources can be converted into material power, and that the state would have more resources in the future to revise the unipolar system.

Status Quo and Incapable Bandwagoners

If a state is content with the international system, and incapable of challenging it, then it is likely that the state would pursue a strategy to increase their security without having to devote the necessary resources to do so. With that being said, there are a few different strategies that states could pursue to fulfill that goal: bandwagoning, regional balancing, buck-passing,

bonding, and domestic political penetration (Walt 2005, 185-194). Given the duration of modern alliances, particularly those following the demise of the Soviet Union, only domestic political penetration and bandwagoning seem to be indicative of alliances and not of responses to particular issues.

Domestic political penetration is a fairly common strategy that states pursue which is based upon attempting to influence the policy pursued by another state through domestic politics (Walt 2005, 194). Walt (2005) examines two cases that have occurred towards the unipole, the United States, in the current system: India and Israel. Certainly both states attempt to lobby for their desired political outcomes in the domestic political system of the United States. However, the broader strategy decision of both states can be classified as bandwagoning given the way each state has addressed regional security issues.

Bandwagoning is conceptualized as a strategy whereby a state chooses to align with the strongest or most threatening state it faces (Walt 2005, 183). In the case of American unipolarity, many of the states may not necessarily feel threatened by the United States as they are status quo powers, but choose to align themselves with the United States because it is the strongest state in the system. Certainly Fiammenghi's (2011) work indicates that bandwagoning is a likely outcome in unipolarity, however, he makes no attempt to bring intention and capability into the causal relationship. As a result, his theory does not explain the goals of revisionist states that are not balancing in any conventional sense, nor are they precisely bandwagoning.

Case Study Method and Case Selection

In order to test my theory and strategy outcomes, this paper will employ a case study method that utilizes process tracing to evaluate decision-making in the current unipolar period. For the purpose of study, this case will be seen as starting on December 26th, 1991 when the Soviet Union formally dissolved. While the test case of modern unipolarity has not ended, and it is unclear when it will, this paper will examine events up to December 26th, 2013. This date was chosen to allow for a precisely 22 yearlong period of study.

Process tracing is an important method for this case, as it looks at the initial case conditions that impacted decision-making to reach certain case outcomes (Van Evra 1997, 64). Utilizing process tracing for this specific case is important for two reasons. First, it allows for an inclusion of rational decision-making calculus which is an important assumption of my model, and an important aspect of modern security studies. Second, it allows for an examination of the causal relationship between my independent variables and dependent variables while accounting for the mechanism whereby that relationship exists (Van Evra 1997, 64).

The case of modern unipolarity was chosen for three reasons. First, given the availability of economic data and modern news cables, data is far more accessible on modern unipolarity than on those in the past, like the British Empire. Second, there have only been two cases of unipolarity since the formation of the modern nation-state structure, an important development for state strategy determinations and modern security studies. This means that the case studies to be chosen would be between the British Empire and American Unipolarity. Third, it can be argued that power disparity is the largest now that it has been in modern times, which means that it is the most easy case to evaluate.

III: Test Case – International Politics Under American Unipolarity

When analyzing the case of American unipolarity, I determine that there are two states that are classified as revisionist economic prebalancers: China and Russia. Conversely, I find that the remaining great powers in the system are status quo bandwagoners: The United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan. For the purpose of clarity, I have provided a table (Figure 2) which may be referenced for this classification. This section will proceed with a discussion the China and Russia as revisionist economic prebalancers and France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan as status quo bandwagoners. Within each discussion will provide the discussion for each variable classification, and a discussion of whether or not the actual strategy outcomes align with the expected strategy outcomes.

Figure 2: Bandwagoners and Economic Prebalancers

Status Quo Bandwagoners (Status Quo and Incapable)	Revisionist Economic Prebalancers (Revisionist and Incapable)
France	China
The United Kingdom	
Germany	Russia
Japan	

China and Russia: Revisionist Economic Prebalancers

Under American unipolarity, I find that there are two states that pursue a strategy of economic prebalancing: China and Russia. As discussed in Section II, the two independent variables leading to this strategy outcome are states that are both revisionist and lack the capabilities to challenge the hegemon. This portion will proceed by analyzing whether or not China and Russia are truly revisionist states or not, and then examining the strategies that these states have pursued.

China:

There is great debate to whether or not China is a status quo power, or a revisionist power. Traditionally, those holding that China is a status quo power make arguments on their privileging of strategic defensive considerations as opposed to offensive ones (Huiyun 2009). Many say that given the prevalence of Confucian thought, China is more peace-loving and defensive, than hawkish (Huiyun 2009). However, both cultural and structural influences lead many to believe that China is a revisionist power. Johnston (1996) and Scobell (2002) argue that China is culturally realist that shows a preference for parabellum strategic culture, a localized understanding of “hard realpolitik” informed by Sun Tzu. Johnston (2003) says that while culture has changed, China is not necessarily more benign with new intentions. Johnston’s (2003, 56) argument is that given domestic political and social factors, and the spiraling US-China security dilemma, as demonstrated through multiple quantitative tests, China continues to be a revisionist state.

The popular response would be that China has been much more cooperative in the past and has increased its interdependence (Combes 2011/2012). However, there are two problems

with this argument. First, China's cooperative and interdependent behavior has been far from universal (Combes 2011/2012), but focusing primarily upon the global free trade regime which my model would expect an economic prebalancer to pursue. Second, China has generally refused to constrain itself through committing to international institutions and norms which demonstrates a desire to remain independent in the security sphere (Combes 2011/2012).

Given these arguments, I code China as a revisionist power. The remaining variable that must be determined is whether or not China has the power to challenge the United States in the short-run. Given the economic and military disparity between the United States and China, it seems that the obvious answer would be "No". However, a rigorous discussion is still necessary: Could China revise the international system now if it so wanted? My answer, still no, is based upon two main arguments.

First, China lacks the necessary blue water navy to engage the United States in a substantive way. This is an important consideration given the importance for navies in global politics: securing trade routes, deterring aggression through offshore balancing, and transporting large amounts of supplies for amphibious assaults. While China aspires such a navy and has plans to expand the People's Liberation Army Navy, the United States has ten aircraft carriers to China's one. This figure is important as any prolonged naval battle or land invasion requires aircraft carriers for support efforts. This does not also assume the disparity that favors the United States in other ships.

Second, even conservative estimates do not have China's GDP converging with the United States until 2019. However, these estimates are generally written off, as they do not account for an aging population, unsustainable Yuan, urban-rural divide, and diminishing economic returns, which occur for developing countries. This also means that even should

China's GDP become larger than the United States', the economy will be less stable given a variety of structural problems that will hamper the transformation of that wealth into military or geopolitical power.

Given that China lacks the capacity to challenge the United States in the short-run and is a revisionist power, my model would expect China to engage in a strategy of economic prebalancing, but does the empirical record confirm such an outcome? Given three conditions, I believe this is an easy classification to make.

First, China's grand strategy has long been self-described as a "peaceful rise". Deng Xiaoping once said, "Lie low. Hide your capabilities. Bide your time." This strategy appears to most certainly be a form of economic prebalancing (Layne 2012, 205). As discussed previously, China has been willing to support the international free trade regime, and that's largely because they are seeking a strategy that is to become wealthy so that it can be transformed into military capabilities that can rival the United States (Layne 2012, 2005).

Second, China is currently focusing upon increasing its regional security and has made operational reach a lower priority (Erickson 2014a). For the purpose of conserving resources and increasing its regional security, China's capabilities are designed to be theater specific and can be perceived as defensive weaponry, not provoking a large security dilemma or a spiral of insecurity. If the United States sees that China is just seeking to defend its territorial integrity then it is unlikely to intervene. This, however, is not a sign that China is a state with status quo intentions, but just that it is seeking to buy itself time. However, given the lack of transparency in the People's Liberation Army budget and the move towards creating a blue water navy one can conclude that China has intentions of increasing its operational reach in the future.

Third, China has prioritized economic growth in the long-run over military capabilities in the short-term. From 1989 to 2013, the increases in the Chinese defense budget were never in double-digit increases. Erickson (2014b) indicates that the 2014 defense budget was an unprecedented increase of 12.2%, which represents a desire to uphold sovereignty, and maritime claims to islands in the East and South China Seas, namely, the Senkaku Islands. However, even as China's defense budget has increased, it is not necessarily a demonstration that they are spending as much as they could, or should be. For example, in 2012 China's military expenditures only equaled 2% of their GDP where in the United States the figure was 4.2%. This parity demonstrates that China is not spending as much as it could be, or would be expected to be if it wanted to challenge the United States.

China has a history of prioritizing economic growth over military expenditures, and the reason is simple, the return on growth is larger for investments in economic growth than for defense expenditures. That is not to say that China would have military expenditures, but China sees economic growth as its primary objective (Chow 2004). This is the crux of economic prebalancing – the privileging of economic growth with the expectation that future wealth would be translated to defense capabilities necessary to revise the system in the long-run.

Russia:

The debate over to whether or not Russia is a revisionist state is perhaps less murky than that of China. Two arguments are generally made to demonstrate that Russia is a revisionist state. First, while it has been willing to engage in certain economic forums, as demonstrated by its recent ascension into the World Trade Organization, it by and large has been unwilling to cooperate with international norms. Certainly, it's intervention in the 2008 August War

demonstrates a desire to return to its previous international prestige and work against existing international institutions, like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Second, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has made his opposition to American unipolarity well known. In 2012, the Duma engaged in a rhetorical strategy of shaming, condemning the United States human rights record and the concentration of international power (Grove 2012).

The immediate question to follow is whether or not Russia has the capability to revise the international system in the short-run. Given the sheer power disparities between Russia and the United States, the answer is simply no. If China, a state that is stronger than Russia in many essential indicators – ground force size, military expenditures, naval strength, GDP, and GDP growth rates – is unable to challenge the United States in the short-run, than it is illogical to suspect that Russia could. Russia, much like China, lacks the naval capabilities necessary to challenge the United States – an example of such is that they do not have a blue water navy as they did in the Soviet era. They only have one aircraft carrier, again, a tenth of what the United States possesses.

Second, Russia lacks the economic power or growth rates to supplant the United States in the short-run. Russia must make a large amount of economic reforms to have an economy stable enough to grow and challenge the United States. On a list of global GDP figures, Russia appears at the end of all great powers studied by this paper, including the United States, China, Japan, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. In addition, Russia's economic growth rates are only marginally larger than the United States and do not demonstrate a trend towards exponential growth (World Bank).

Given that Russia is a revisionist state that lacks the capabilities to challenge the United States in the short-run, does the empirical record confirm my finding that it is pursuing a strategy

of economic prebalancing? The answer is not a definite as in the case of China, but is leaning more towards economic prebalancing than any other alternative strategy.

Russia's accession into the World Trade Organization, and various economic reforms to liberalize their economy reveal a transition towards privileging economic growth over material power gains in the short-run. While Russia very much continues to use its energy exports as a weapon, the disputes between Russia and Ukraine between 2005 and 2009 serve as evidence, they are focusing more upon economic growth than challenging the United States. In 2013, the Kremlin released its foreign policy goals, which indicated a decision to increase economic growth in the long run through "technological modernization" and "innovation-based development," (Putin 2013).

While I would say that these indications present a decision to prioritize economic growth over security increased in the short-run, there are many potential pitfalls of this classification. Critics might say that Russia spends approximately the same on military expenditures as a percentage of GDP as the United States, demonstrating a decision to engage in internal balancing (World Bank). In addition, the 2013 foreign policy goals for Russia seemed to include certain revisionist language based upon status quo calculations. Perhaps the line that encapsulates this the best is as follows:

The ability of the West to dominate world economy and politics continues to diminish. The global power and development potential is now more dispersed and is shifting to the East, primarily to the Asia-Pacific region. The emergence of new global economic and political actors with Western countries trying to preserve their traditional positions enhances global competition, which is manifested in growing instability in international relations (Putin 2013).

Germany, Japan, France, and the United Kingdom: Status Quo Bandwagoners

Under American unipolarity, I find that four states would be expected to engage in a strategy of bandwagoning: Germany, Japan, France, and the United Kingdom. Much like the economic prebalancers, these bandwagoners engage this strategy in a different way and to a different degree. As discussed in Section II, if a state is both a status quo power that lacks the capabilities to challenge the hegemon, we would expect the state to bandwagon with the strongest state in the system. This section will proceed by analyzing whether or not the strategies of Germany, Japan, France, and the United Kingdom can be classified as bandwagoning.

Germany:

Given historical trends, many political scientists indicate that Germany is still at risk of becoming aggressive (Mandelbaum 2005). However, given post-Cold War trends, they seem to be quite satisfied with American-led unipolarity. Germany has been extremely active in promoting international norms and upholding the current order. Their willingness to keep the Eurozone from faltering, even in the face of domestic political pressure to end contributions to the European Central Bank demonstrates that they are satisfied with their current economic arrangements. In addition, Germany's willingness to engage in multilateral consensus building and international institutions demonstrates a desire to keep stability and uphold the current system created by the Allies following World War II, and the United States following the Cold War (Belkin 2009).

Given the classification of Germany as a status quo power, there must also be the consideration of whether or not they are capable of revising the system in the short-run. While

the German economy is quite large, in terms of GDP it is only around a fifth the size of the United States'. This demonstrates that they lack the economic capabilities to revise the system in the interim because the United States overall economic power is large enough to make any revision a fruitless effort. In addition, they lack the military capabilities, and specifically naval capabilities to challenge the United States in a prolonged conflict or the necessary military size to challenge the United States with expenditures being only approximately 8% of those of the United States (SIPRI 2013).

Given that Germany is a status quo power incapable of challenging the United States, does it pursue a strategy of bandwagoning with the United States? The nature of Germany's security agreements demonstrates that they are largely dependent upon the United States for their own security. Germany's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), their hosting of approximately 40 United States military installations, and willingness to join many NATO missions including Afghanistan and Libya demonstrates that they are willing to align with the United States. While many point to German opposition to the war in Iraq as a form of soft balancing, it appears to be an exception rather than the rule for an otherwise consolidated alliance.

Japan:

Much like Germany, Japan's current engagement in international relations is much tied to their actions of the past, with many scholars claiming there is a potential they will return to more aggressive behavior in the future (Mandelbaum 2005). Their nuclear weapons capability and current disputes with China lead many to believe that Japan may rearm itself with nuclear

armaments (Keck 2013). With that being said, there are many reasons to believe that Japan will not develop nuclear weapons, including a consolidated constitutional article preventing it.

Japan, much like Germany, has been extremely proactive in international agreements and norms building which demonstrates a satisfaction with the status quo order. Dobson (2010) indicates that Japan is easily classified as a status quo power given its goal of ensuring the success of the G20, while also fighting for the success of the G8 (40-41). Japan has also been more willing to support the status quo balance of power given the rise of China, leading Japan to play a leading role in the consolidation of international norms (Dobson 2010, 41).

Three indicators reveal that Japan is unable to revise the international system, or challenge the United States directly. First, Japan lacks the naval capabilities necessary to challenge American unipolarity. Specifically, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force is unable to have aircraft carriers as a result of domestic law and does not have the capability to operate on a large-scale offensive effort. Second, while Japan has the third highest GDP in the world, it is still only approximately a third of that of the United States. Finally, since 2009 Japan's defense expenditures have never exceeded 1% of their GDP even while their threats have increased from regional enemies (World Bank).

Given that Japan is a status quo power incapable of challenging American unipolarity, have they made the decision to bandwagon with the United States as my theory would predict? Japan's security is dependent upon the United States, and it has placed a great deal into the United States-Japanese security alliance. This is evidenced by the Japanese continuation of the Japan-US Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security following the Cold War, the presence of essential military bases in Japan, and US-Japanese war games and joint training operations. This

demonstrates an active decision by Japan to align them self with the United States in the security sphere.

France:

Since the end of World War II, France has largely been categorized as a status quo power – it has been an active participant in consolidating international institutions like the European Union, United Nations, and World Trade Organization, while also being a signatory to many important treaties (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Checkel 1997). France has also been considered one of the few states that has done everything within its control to incorporate international norms into domestic policy and legal precedents (Leroux 2011, 85). This demonstrates a long-run commitment to the status quo system that has formed under American unipolarity. Within France, non-state actors have adopted something of an “international personality” demonstrating a public commitment to understanding the norms formulated by international norms and conventions (Leroux 2011, 87).

There are two indicators demonstrating that France is incapable of revising the international system in the short-run. First, France only has one aircraft carrier currently in service and has not commissioned any further ships to be constructed. As discussed previously, this demonstrates they lack the material capabilities necessary to revise unipolarity. Second, as measured by GDP, the French economy is roughly an eighth the size of the United States’. This demonstrates a lack of latent power capabilities to challenge the United States.

While some may say that the experience with French opposition to Iraq demonstrates a form of soft balancing against the United States, the trend following the end of the Cold War has favored bandwagoning. French membership in NATO demonstrates a desire to integrate their

security policy with the United States over the long-term. Mowle and Sacko (2007) demonstrate that this is a rational calculation France makes – that they will bandwagon with the United States in hope of having some say over American foreign policy, even if it means supporting a policy they otherwise would not, or losing an audience (597). While the United States lacks military bases in France, there exists a long-standing tradition of security cooperation (Belkin 2011).

The United Kingdom:

Arguably as the last hegemon, some may suspect the United Kingdom would return to its imperial ambitions and seek to revise American unipolarity. However, while evaluating trends following the end of the Cold War, the United Kingdom largely appears to be a status quo state. First, the power transition from a world led by the United Kingdom to one led by the United States demonstrates that from the period of transition the United Kingdom has been willing to be a status quo power and to remain one (Yongping 2006). Second, since the end of the Cold War specifically, the United Kingdom has been particularly active in international norm building and in international institutions like the European Union and the United Nations (Morphet 2005).

The United Kingdom also lacks the ability to challenge the current system. Once having one of the best navies in the world, the United Kingdom's royal navy is set to decommission its only aircraft carrier in 2014, leaving them without the capability to challenge the United States in a large scale conflict. Secondly, the United Kingdom's GDP growth rates are significantly less than those of the United States and as of 2012, its GDP was roughly a sixth of that of the United States.

Given that the United Kingdom is a status quo power that is incapable of revising the system, it would be expected that they have pursued a strategy of bandwagoning. The empirical

record largely aligns with this expectation. The United Kingdom has decided to continue alignment with the United States in the security sphere following the end of the Cold War, as evidenced by their continued membership in NATO, and willingness to pledge forces for wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq. In addition, the United Kingdom houses multiple US military installations, which demonstrates a willingness to tie them self to United States security policy.

IV: Conclusion

Absent the case of Russia, my theory seems to be supported by the case study of American unipolarity. China, and to some degree, Russia, who are both revisionist powers incapable of challenging unipolarity, have pursued strategies of economic prebalancing. Conversely, the status quo powers who are incapable of challenging unipolarity – Germany, Japan, France, and the United Kingdom – have aligned themselves greatly with the hegemon and have designed their security policy to be dependent upon the United States. This study is important so that state strategy decisions can be understood in a specific polar system that is rarely evaluated. Absent a theory that starts from unipolarity, there is a lack explanatory power for current events or those in a future unipolar period.

Given these considerations and the evidence, however, there are certain shortcomings of my study. First, this study lacks the Large-N methods necessary to test how strong the correlation is between my independent variables and strategy outcomes. This study would be improved by a further test of the causal mechanisms outlined in this article. Second, given the breadth of the states analyzed and my lack of regional expertise on the politics of each of these countries, future research could be conducted to add depth to my case study and either confirm or deny my findings. Finally, this study could be strengthened by a more rigorous method of

measuring the prevalence of each independent variable and strategy outcome. Scholars specializing in methodology could benefit this study by providing alternative forms of variable measurement.

Bibliography

- Belkin, Paul. 2009. "German Foreign and Security Policy: Trends and Transatlantic Implications." Congressional Research Service. (May 20, 2009).
- Belkin, Paul. 2011. "France: Factors Shaping Foreign Policy, and Issues in U.S. French Relations." Congressional Research Service. (April 14, 2011).
- Braumoeller, Bear F. 2012. *The Great Powers and the International System*. Cambridge University Press.
- Brawley, Mark R. 2004. "The Political Economy of Balance of Power Theory." In *Balance of Power*. T.V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michel Fortmann. Stanford University Press.
- Brooks, Stephen G. and William C. Wohlforth. 2008. *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Checkel, Jeffrey T. 1997. "International Norms and Domestic Politics: Bridging the Rationalist-Constructivist Divide." *European Journal of International Relations*. 3 (1997): 473-495.
- Combes, Katherine. 2011/2012. "Between Revisionism and Status Quo: China in International Regimes." *POLIS Journal*. 6 (2011/2012): 1-37.
- Dobson, Hugo. 2010. "Japan and the Changing Global Balance of Power: The View from the Summit." *Politics* 30:1 (2010): 33-42.
- Erickson, Andrew. 2014a. "Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Hearing on China's Military Modernization and its Implications for the United States."
http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Andrew%20Erickson_testimony1.30.14.pdf
(January 30, 2014).
- Erickson, Andrew. 2014b. "The Budget This Time: Taking the Measure of China's Defense Spending." The ASAN Forum. <http://www.theasanforum.org/the-budget-this-time-taking-the-measure-of-chinas-defense-spending/> (April 11, 2014).
- Fiammenghi, Davide. 2011. "The Security Curve and the Structure of International Politics." *International Security* 35:4 (2011): 126-154.
- Finnemore, Martha and Kathryn Sikkink, 1998. "International Norms Dynamics and Political Change." *International Organization* 52:4 (Autumn 1998): 887-917.
- Glaser, Charles A. 2010. *Rational Theory of International Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Grove, Thomas. 2012. "Russia Condemns United States for Human Rights Record." October 22. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/22/us-russia-usa-humanrights-idUSBRE89L14O20121022> (Accessed December 4, 2013).
- Huiyun, Feng. 2009. "Is China a Revisionist Power?" *Chinese Journal of International Politics*. 2:3 (2009): 313-334.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain. 1996. "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China." In *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. Peter Katzenstein. Columbia University Press.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain. 2003. "Is China a Status Quo Power?" *International Security*. 27:4 (2003): 5-56.
- Keck, Zachary. 2013. "US Grows Concerned About Japan's Military Revival." August 10. <http://thediplomat.com/2013/08/us-grows-concerned-about-japans-military-revival/>. (August 10, 2013).
- Lake, David A. 2009. *Hierarchy in International Relations*. Cornell University Press.
- Layne, Christopher. 2006. "The Unipolar Illusion Revisited: The Coming End of the United States' Unipolar Moment." *International Security* 31:2 (Fall 2006): 7-41.
- Leroux, Nicholas. 2011. "Non-state actors in French legal scholarship." In *Participants in the International Legal System*. Jean d'Aspremont. Routledge.
- Levy, Jack S. and William R. Thompson. 2010. "Balancing on Land and at Sea: Do States Ally against the Leading Global Power." *International Security* 35:1 (Summer): 7-43.
- Lieber, Kier A. and Gerard Alexander. 2005. "Waiting for Balancing: Why the World is Not Pushing Back." *International Security* 30:1 (2005): 109-139.
- Mabry, Rodney H. and Halley H. Ulbrich. 1989. *Introduction to Economic Principles*. McGraw Hill Education.
- Mandelbaum, Michael. 2005. *The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World's Government in the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Public Affairs, Print.
- Mearsheimer, John J. 2003. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Norton: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Morphet, Sally. 2005. "The UN, Democracy and Europe since 1945." In *Socializing Democratic Norms: The Role of International Organizations for the Construction of Europe* by Trine Flockhart. Palgrave MacMillan: New York and Basingstroke, Hampshire. 65-84.

- Mowle, Thomas S. and David H. Sacko. 2007. "Global NATO: Bandwagoning in a Unipolar World." *Contemporary Security Policy*. 28:3 (December 2007): 597-618.
- Pape, Robert A. 2005. "Soft Balancing Against the United States." *International Security* 30:1 (2005): 7-45.
- Paul, T.V. 2005. "Soft Balancing in the Age of US Primacy." *International Security* 30:1 (2006): 46-71.
- Putin, Vladimir. 2013. "Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation."
<http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/869c9d2b87ad8014c32575d9002b1c38!OpenDocument>. (February 12, 2013).
- Schweller, Randall L. 2011. "The Future is Uncertain and the End is Always Near." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 24:2 (June 2011): 175-184
- Scobell, Andrew. 2002. "China and Strategic Culture." Report for *Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College*.
<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub60.pdf> (May 2002).
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. 2013. "SIPRI Military Expenditure Database."
http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database.
- Van Evra, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Cornell University Press..
- Walt, Stephen M. 1985. "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power." *International Security* 9:4 (Spring): 3-43.
- Walt, Stephen M. 2002. *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy*. Norton: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- World Bank. 2014. "World Bank National Accounts Data."
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTPD.ZG>
- Yongping, Feng. 2006. "The Peaceful Transition of Power from the UK to the US." *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 1 (2006): 83-108.