# Using Power Cycle Theory and Role Realignment Theory to Recognize the International Roles of China and the United States

**Dr. Michael S. Pepe**
Associate Professor of Marketing, Siena College
515 Loudon Road, Loudonville, NY 12211, USA
518-782-6811

**Kaitlyn Krolik**
Political Science Major, History Minor
Siena College
515 Loudon Road, Loudonville, NY 12211, USA

## Abstract

*The future role of China and the United States within the international system continues to be a topic of discussion. According to the power cycle theory by Charles Doran and the role realignment theory by William Lahneman, the international system's stability, as well as relations between states, is determined by the alignment of each state's role within the system. Actual-potential role analysis measures the difference between the role a state is currently acting in and the role that major trends ascribe to that state. This difference is used to expose any role gaps that would cause tension and instability within the system. The current tension between China and the international system can be attributed to its actual role being much lower than its potential role; therefore, China is not contributing its appropriate share to the international system. The United States role gap extends the opposite direction as it is not properly adjusting to the changes within the system appropriately.*

*Keywords:* Power cycle theory, role realignment theory, international roles

## Background

A critical question facing U.S. foreign policy scholars, international relations scholars, and news media journalists is if the United States is facing its demise as an international power. The argument typically is made that the US is no longer ruling over the international system with the same vigor as it has in past years. Some cite the relative fall of the United States in a number of international statistical rankings systems. Others argue that the power demise of the U.S. is favorable to China and others claim that war will erupt to attempt to save the current international system. Charles Doran contends that this is a possibility, while also stating that India may force China to confront the bounds of the system and descend from its current relative power position. Kagan argues that China is not a 'threat' to the United States, but Americans have predicted its demise since its rise to power. When he compared the current situation to those of the past, he concluded that the current system has been in place since the end of World War II with a number of situations that seemed as if they would be the ultimate end for the United States' power placement. This study assesses the international power cycle and the roles of the United States and China. The underlying question that prompted this study is if either country is leading a role that is misaligned from what is achievable.

## Power Cycle Theory

The power cycle theory, introduced by Charles Doran in 1964, argues that states experience a cyclic rise and fall from power. The power cycle theory displays the cyclic nature of nations' roles in the international system and seeks to explain the effects of this cycle, especially in terms of war causation. Doran has developed a definitive cycle with critical points that follows the transformations that occur in the international system. This cycle can be applied to determine the nation in question's future expectations as well as its international-political role. Doran explains the indicators he uses rather simply. He uses a relative power ratio that compares a nation's absolute capability (numerator) to the absolute capability of the system (denominator) which quantifies a nation's relative power.

This ratio affects a state's international-political behavior, or role. A role is "more than power position, or place, within the international system, although role encompasses these considerations. Role suggests informally legitimated responsibilities and perquisites associated with position and place." The nation's role, international-political behavior and responsibilities, must be deemed appropriate by the other major powers in international system to be legitimate. The nation's role and relative power are used to determine a nation's position on the power cycle. Doran has two fundamental principles that are used to define the power cycle and its transitions. The power cycle theory is based upon two fundamental principles. These principles are used to explain "what sets the cycles in motion and the peculiar nonlinearities of relative power change." The first postulates that if a nation's growth rate is greater than the systemic norm, the state's systemic share will increase. This initiates change in the structure of the system. The second fundamental principle of the power cycle explains that: even when the differing state absolute growth rates remained unchanged throughout the system, a state's relative power growth will accelerate only for a time and then (at inflection point F) begin a process of declaration, due to the bounds of the system (finiteness of systemic share), which bring about peaking (Z) and a turn into relative decline. Similarly, accelerating decline will (at inflection point L) begin to decelerate to a minimum level. This principle explains the bounds of the system due to the competitiveness of the power share. Also, the principle defines the three critical points (F, Z, and L) that all signify changes in the power share ratio. These critical points are crucial in understanding the uncertainties and insecurities nations face that cause dramatic changes to the international system.

## Role Realignment Theory

The role realignment theory, introduced by William Lahneman, utilizes the power cycle theory to define a nation's foreign policy role and the appropriate military might. Lahneman uses Doran's definition of international political role with its four attributing factors to define a nation's foreign policy role. He believes that "as states rise or fall on its power cycles, power-role gaps emerge because of an inherent inertia in adjusting roles and responsibilities" power-role gaps are when the state's power portrayed through action is not aligned with the nation's relative role in the international system. The power cycle theory calls for gaps to be reduced before they disrupt the international system's equilibrium. The role realignment theory goes a step farther by specifying which indicators, or roles, are misaligned for major states and prescribing a way to realign. Power-role gaps are determined by using the four roles: ascribed, declaratory, operational, and structural.

Realigning America Dissertation focuses on the United States' power position in the international system and role realignments between 1986 and 1996. According to Lahneman, the American Armed Forces have hollowed out post-World War II. He believes that the United States and other major powers in the international system overspend on the defense and security. He created his study to assist foreign policy makers in assessing the position of a given country and by providing them with an anchor to combat overspending. Lahneman uses the role realignment theory to postulate whether American foreign policy scope and US defense spending should expand, contract, or remain the same. Each role serves a specific purpose. The structural role links a country's relative power to its national power; the "structural role encompasses the underlying capability that provides a state with its current ability to actualize power and its capacity for long-term economic growth." Structural role provides the anchor for the other three roles by providing the means to enact their functions. Lahneman encourages decision makers to use structural role as a tool to ensure a nation is allocating a reasonable amount to military expenses, leaving enough to invest in the nation's economic growth, infrastructure, and financial institutions. If this is not adhered to, a nation's economic growth will diminish along with its relative power. Lahneman uses structural role as an ideal that "assesses the manifestation of their foreign policy, which is expressed by operational and declaratory role"

Operational role is what a nation is capable of doing in response to international threats, events, and conflicts. Operational role measures a state's ability to protect itself or extend aid to protect other nations. Lahneman uses military spending and the defense burden to measure the state's power. He isolates the role militaries play in the international system as its own role because it is more than just extending national power, it is also a major expense burdening a nation. Declaratory role is the exhibition of power without using force, but words. Foreign policy declarations made by the leaders of states define the role the state intends to fill. This role is the nation's input into its ascribed role and also takes direct responses to international events under consideration. Lahneman argues that the declaratory role accurately mirrors its structural and operational roles as it helps other states develop a desirable and possible ascribed role.

However, nations tend to inflate the declaratory role for it does not directly require actions. Deflation typically occurs when the action declared is expected to be enacted. Ascribed role works with declaratory role to accurately paint the foreign policy of a nation. Ascribed role is what other states in the international system expect out of a given nation's foreign policy role. Ascribed role measures the percentage of total system role that the member of the system allow a given state to exercise. This is determined by evaluating the extent of leadership, the prestige other states accord, and whether its counsel is valued. States within the international system declare the expectations for other nations through ambassadors, diplomats, military demonstrations, and public diplomacy. States have the ability to both constrain and expand another's role. Ascribed role are states' way of regulating concepts like leadership, which are not attained unless ascribed.

Misalignments are determined by first comparing the declaratory to the ascribed role and the operational role to the structural role. Declaratory and ascribed roles can only be measured qualitatively; ordinal measurement is best. Both the ascribed and declaratory roles would be assuming the same foreign policy to be aligned. Any discrepancy between the expected role and the declared role is misaligned. While structural and declaratory roles uses interval measurement. Lahneman compared the percent shares of exchanged rates and per capita of structural role and declaratory role to determine alignment. A misalignment would be definite if there is a difference in percent shares between the two roles. Admittedly, these misalignments are in very general terms due to the broad nature of the roles.

## *Purpose, Justification, and Research Objectives*

This study emerged through analysis of the power cycle and role realignment theories. The power cycle theory coined the power-role gap which exposed the difference between power cycle placement and legitimated role. Doran's focus was to determine where nations placed in relation to one another and to assess the potential effects of these changes. Lahneman was concerned that the United States armed forces were hallowing out and the roles were misaligned. The realignment theory prioritizes each state's military capacity and military expenditures. This assessment sees a growth in an economy as an indicator that there should be an increase in military expenditures. Building upon the idea that misalignments, or gaps, cause significant problems that threaten the stability of the international system, the actual-potential role gap emerged. The actual-potential role gap analyzes the actual role a nation is assuming and assesses its alignment with the potential role it indicates it could assume.

This study adds to the neorealist international relations field of knowledge as it assesses a nation's current role in the international system and judges if that role adequately reflects the resources that nation can provide. In terms of the neorealist theory, this study assesses if the internal rebalancing of a nation determines the external rebalancing of the system. The actual-potential role gap reveals the discrepancies between the expectations the system has for nations and the actual capabilities of that nation. This recognizes how the changes experienced by individual states affect the entire system. As the structure changes, the roles each state fills need to compensate for the changes. This study objectively quantifies changed roles of nations so the ascribed roles highlighted in Doran and Lahneman's studies can change accordingly.

Lahneman's beliefs are challenged as the actual-potential role gap determines there is no purpose for an increased military budget without a growing ascribed role from the international system. Also, both the power cycle theory and the role realignment theory did not take into account the stability of the rising nation. A nation cannot have a strong foreign policy without a stable government and a stable social arrangement. Intense civil unrest distracts government from engaging with and supporting other nations. Therefore, an indicator has been adopted to assess and compare each state's national stability. The structural indicator paired with the functional indicator will define the potential foreign policy of a nation. That will then be compared to the actual role of the nation, which will be determined through the ascribed, declaratory, and operational indicator analysis.

This study's focus is to determine the role that China and the United States occupy within the international structure and the scope of the role they have the potential to occupy and assesses the structural indicator exclusively. The structural indicator is modeled after the structural role explained by Lahneman in "Anchoring American Foreign Policy" and lays the foundation for a strong actual potential role analysis. The actual-potential role gap investigates how well roles are ascribed based upon the amount of relative power and resources a state possesses and measures how much power the international system is currently giving a state. This is mostly made up of a number of indicators not outlined in this study along with the structural indicator.

The structural indicator is used to determine the current productivity of the state to compare against the ascribed indicator, which analyzes the role in which the international community expects out of a state. This is also compared with the functional indicator, international indicator, and declaratory indicator. The potential role then distinguishes the role in which the state has the capacity to fill. The structural indicator is used to understand this role's potential outputs and potential productivity. This is determined by comparing the structural indicator, functional indicator, and the operational indicator to the ascribed and declaratory indicator. These two roles are then compared and if there is a gap between the potential and actual role, the country is misaligned. This is a problem not only for the country, but for the international system as well.

Misalignments expose the instability of the system because it means that a state's role is larger than it can sustain, or that the state desires or has earned a larger role. Both of these misalignments are known to have caused wars in the past. If all of the nation's actual-potential roles are aligned, then the system is stable signifying a time of great peace. This study focuses on the misalignments or alignments of China and the United States and by observing the differences in roles within the international system, actual-potential role analysis are capable in determining what role these states are actually able to fulfill. **Hypothesis 1:** There are misalignments between the potential role and actual role of both China and the United States within the international system.

## *Indicators*

The strength of a state within the international system is influenced by a number of factors. Before prescribing a state with a leadership role, the state proves its ability to intervene to enforce the international ethical code as well as for the interests of the whole. Also, a state must be stable, reliable, and prosperous. The indicators analyzed in this study to determine a nation's role within the system are:
• Structural Indicator
• Functional Indicator

Individually, these indicators are used to assess the wellbeing of a state. Each one provides insight to how a state is working. When compared, one gets an overview of the state's strengths and weaknesses. This is used to determine its potential role based upon the discrepancies. The structural indicator measures the condition of the economy. The structural indicator is determined through analysis and comparison of each nation's GDP, PPP, and per capita GDP. The GDP, or gross domestic product, is all converted to US currency. The "purchasing power parity' estimations of GDP and per capita are useful to see the actual productivity. The purpose of looking at two different types of GDP is that traditional exchange-rate based GDP is reliable for internationally exchanged goods, where PPP takes into consideration the changes in value of national goods. This indicator directly reflects Lahneman's structural role. Lahneman explains how, "per capital GDP, using PPP conversion rates to US dollars, gives a more accurate representation of the overall welfare of a country's inhabitants." This indicator gives one the ability to assess the state's economic sphere. Structural indicator directly affects all of the other indicators. If a state's economy does not function, it will not have the means to accomplish any of its national or international goals.

## *Indicator Interactions*

Each of the indicators listed above are specific in assisting to define a nation's role and ability within the international system. By analyzing these roles separately then comparing the results, one is able to both define the role a state currently plays in each indicator and expose any misalignments in its ability to sustain that role. There are key interactions within these individual indicators that helps define them and show the interdependent nature of these indicators. The structural indicator is referred to as the "anchor" by Lahneman. This is because it has a significant amount of control on the roles and the rest of the indicators. The structural indicator effects the functional indicator by providing, or not providing, the means a government uses to operate. Without a strong structural indicator, or economy, a government would have difficulty functioning and may end up relying on foreign investment to develop. However, money fuels corruption, so a strong structural role does not necessarily mean a strong functional role. The structural role can serve as a distraction for the government if it is struggling; this causes the state to switch its focus from the international system to the government. In terms of human development, "economic growth is a means and not an end of development. Moreover, high GDP growth does not necessarily translate to progress in human development." This shows the dynamic nature of their relationship and that the economy is not the most important aspect of defining foreign policy.

The structural indicator can also be effected by the functional indicator. For example, if a nation proves corrupt, it the economy is likely to be stunted. The higher the state's standing, the stronger the economy should be.

This stresses that these two indicators shed light on two different parts of the development or decline of a state. Therefore, they need to be analyzed collaboratively.

## *Analysis of Results*

The actual and potential roles of a state are exposed when one looks at all of its indicators collectively. This study uses a three-point system. For each subset within each indicator, a state will be prescribed a 1, 2, or 3. This number is decided by what group percent share it occupies. If an indicator is assessing the states through a group percent share of over 20% it will receive a 1, of over 10% it will receive a 2, and of fewer than 10% it will receive a 3. For subsets that are not assessed by group percent shares, the data set is converted into percentages. When the listed percentages are not relevant, another categorization method will be listed. These numbers are telling of how active of a leadership role the state takes. If it is forefront leader and contributor, it most lively will receive a 1. If the state sometimes takes a leadership or contributing role or is one of the first states to follow a set leader(s), it will most likely receive a 2. If the state never takes a leadership or contributing role and/or it often receives the contributions or guidance, it will most likely receive a 1. These numbers will be collected and compared. The numbers in their initial form represent the actual role of the state. If a state is balanced, it will have the same number for all of the indicators. This means that it is enacting its fullest potential. However, if this is not the case, the discrepancies will provide insight into what the state's potential role should be.

## *Analysis*

The following section takes a look at each of the structural and functional indicators to determine the actual and potential role of China and the United States comparatively to the rest of the international system. This is done by analyzing the role each nation has per indicator. After, an inclusive analysis of all of the indicators determines the actual and potential role. All disparities are revealed and the impacts each has on the international system's stability is explained. Also, an overview of the stability of the international system is included. Through this analysis, one is able to detect rising nations as the system changes. All comparisons made in the Results and Misalignment sections are relative on the basis of the data and documents provided. The purpose is to ultimately determine the role that China and the United States should be leading through recognizing the actual-potential role gap. This provides a way for policymakers to assess the state's position in the international system and to adjust foreign policy according to the changes occurring within the system. In particular, this will help them determine to what degree changes need to occur to the roles they project on other nations.

## *Structural Indicator*

The Structural Indicator demonstrates the level of foreign policy scope and engagement that is commensurate with a state's placement in the international system.

## *Overview*

The structural indicator is used to show the economic capacities of a state. A state's structural indicator reflect the changes that have occurred within the international system. This is revealed by states that are rising or falling at a faster rate than the rest. Even though the structural indicator has an international component to it, it also represents the national power of a given state. It is directly linked to a state's national power, which makes it vital in depicting a nation's foreign policy accurately. The structural indicator shows the strength of the nation through its ability to acquire revenue, sustain a suitable standard of living and exchange goods. This indicator uses the strength of a state's economy that is either positively or negatively affected by the international system, to define the actual role. A state's ability or inability to uphold the changes within the system to form the potential role. The structural indicator is measured through a nation's economic might. This study uses the World Bank's versions of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) estimates of GDP, and GDP per capita PPP. The GDP measures the total number of goods and services consumed within a year in every country. The PPP estimates of GDP compares domestic prices of non-traceable goods and looks at the disparities between like product prices internationally. This provides a sense of the overall health of the economy comparatively. Lastly, the GDP per capita (PPP) captures the economic wellbeing of its average citizen by comparing the GDP estimates of PPP to the national population. This brings the focus, in part, back to the wellbeing of the people.
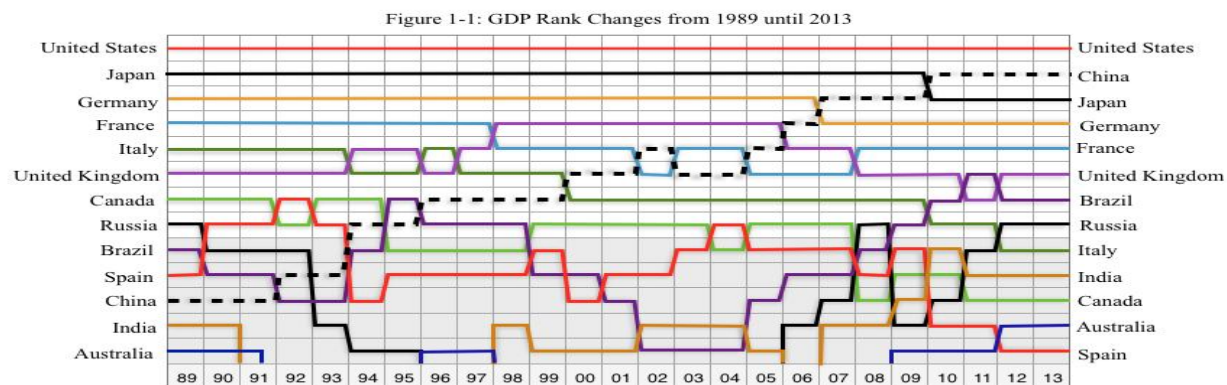
The goal of the structural indicator is to determine if there has been any major change in state's economic power within the international system.

### Analysis

The international structure has changed dramatically since 1995 when Lahneman concluded his research. At that time, the system was dominated by the United States, Japan, and Germany, respectively. Lahneman's study focused on two main groups: the states that were most powerful economically, the Group of 7 or G7 and those he considered the most powerful, "Major Powers." The G7 consisted of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Canada. The "Major Powers" included the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, Japan, and China. Together, these nations were his focus when analyzing the roles of these nations in the international structure. However, while determining the current players in the international system, major changes emerged that have occurred in the past 20 years. This study will look at the changes that have occurred within the international structure with the target nations being: The United States, China, the United Kingdom, Japan, Brazil, Italy, India, Russia, Germany, and Canada. These 10 states were chosen because they have all spent considerable amount of time as one of the top 7 GDP positions, which is the founding indicator of the Group of 7.

The G7 is a compilation of major industrially developed countries with large GDPs that have held annual economic summits since 1975. The purpose of this group is to discuss "major economic and political issues on their agenda" with it. This elitist group has an active role in making major economic and political decisions that affect the entire system. Briefly, this group was transformed into the commonly known Group of 8 when Russia joined, however, Russia has had its membership taken away. Up until 1995, the member states of the G7 also ranked as the 7 largest economies, validating their membership in the G7. However, the past 25 years have shifted the rank of most nations dramatically.
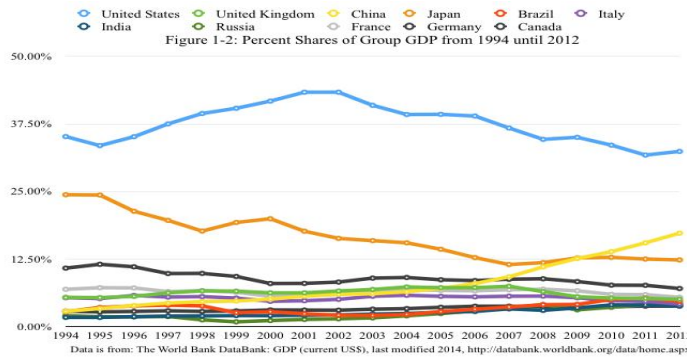
Figure 1-1 depicts the changes that have taken place amongst the top 13 largest GDPs. The top seven GDP ranking spots have not belong to strictly the G7 states. Canada dropped out of the top seven spots in 1994, and since then, there has not been a year with all G7 member states in the top seven ranking positions. Other nations that have occupied the top seven spots include China, Spain, India, Brazil, and Russia. Interestingly, all of these states have each occupied a top spot longer than Russia, but have never been offered membership to the group. Russia has only been a viable top eight ranking state for four years out of the 25 years, but was the only state offered temporary membership to this elite group. It is actually the only state to drop below the top 16 ranking states.



Figure 1-1: GDP Rank Changes from 1989 until 2013

Data is from: The World Bank DataBank: GDP (current US$), last modified 2014, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx.

Therefore, if the group is actually based upon economic might, other states, most likely China, would have been offered membership. The country that shows to have the most significant changes to its rank is China. It has held a top seven rank since 1995. It first bumped Canada out of the top seven, and continued to climb the ranks until it settled at second to the United States. No other state has shifted ranks so dramatically over this period. However, China is not a part to the G8 summit even though it outranks all but one of its members. This unveils a misalignment between the membership of the G7 and the rank of China. Another indicator used to understand a state's economic status in the international system is GDP.
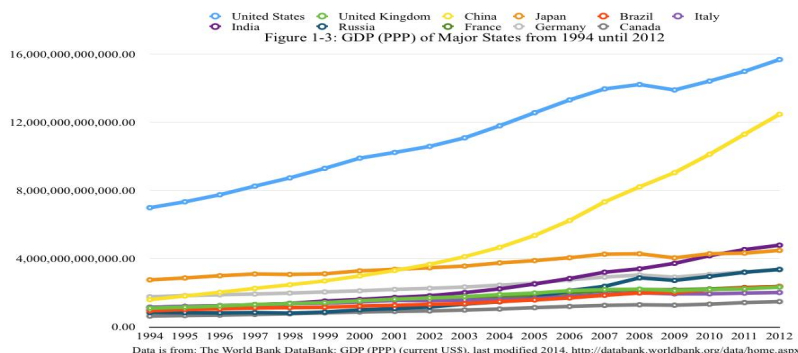
However, applying the bounds of the system reveals the changes in the system more actively because the amount of relative power a state has is tied directly to those in the international system. Therefore, when changes occur to any state's actual GDP, the amount of relative power alters to adjust. To truly observe these changes, the bounds of the international system need to be applied.

This is done by taking into account the relative structure of the system. No state can have 100% of the GDP or relative power because there is only that amount. Therefore, by dividing each state's amount by that of the whole, there is an accurate portrayal of how much relative power a state has within the system. Figure 1-2 displays the shifts the changes in trends cause.



Figure 1-2: Percent Shares of Group GDP from 1994 until 2012

Data is from: The World Bank DataBank: GDP (current US$), last modified 2014, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx.

The United States, in actual GDP terms, dominates the structure. However, its relative power tells a different story. The United States had a peak in 2001-2 then entered into relative decline. This trend may reverse in the future, as it did in 1995 and looks as it may between 2011 and 2012. Another possible scenario is that the United States will continue to decrease and level out with the potential of a new state acting as the dominant state. When a state is rising at a faster rate than the other state, the slower state is forced into relative decline. The percent shares compared of 1994 to 2012 show that the United States has only dropped three points, from 37% to 34%. This is insignificant when the size of the number and the gap between it and the next highest state. A nation that experienced a more significant relative decline is Japan. When compared to Japan, which dropped for 26% to 12%, which is more than half of its relative percent share. Japan has lost its power to the international system, mostly to China.

A nation only goes into relative decline when another nation is gaining significant percent share. China is the only country in this period that has increased relative power significantly. China has been able to increase relative power from 3% to 18% in only 18 years. This is a major jump that may force the international system to adjust to accommodate for China's new importance or at least signifies some change in Chinese dominance and foreign policy.



Figure 1-3: GDP (PPP) of Major States from 1994 until 2012

Data is from: The World Bank DataBank: GDP (PPP) (current US$), last modified 2014, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx.
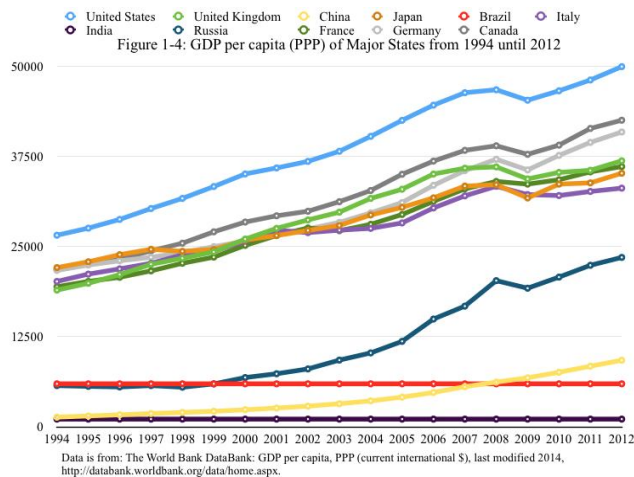
The next component that makes up structural indicator is GDP estimates by PPP. This looks at the national economic strength. Figure 1-3 captures the actual GDP (PPP) changes of the major states between 1994 and 2014. The first notable difference is that all countries are growing a quicker rate than that of actual GDP. This shows China quickly closing the gap between itself and the United States. The second difference is that the pack of states that tend to travel together has spread out as the GDP (PPP) estimation rates grow at different paces distinguishing the ranks of the states. In this measurement, India has accelerated into the third highest rank.

India's progress may be signifying the shift of growth in India following China's lead. This is plausible because China also had noticeable growth in GDP (PPP) before it is in GDP. GDP (PPP) changed the relative power sector look very similar to those of plain GDP. Once again, the United States is in relative decline. However, The United States has lost more relative power share as it is relinquishing to both India and China. The comparison emphasizes the narrow gap between the United States and China.

This serves as supplemental evidence, paired with GDP, of the restructuring of the international system to emphasize the necessity of include non-western states in the elite as they rise to power and economic domination. The last factor for structural indicator, GDP per capita, will show how the economic prosperity of countries directly effects the individual household. This is especially important when paired with the functional role to assess how well the government is serving their citizens.

Figure 1-4 demonstrates the GDP per capita (PPP) of the states from 1994 to 2012. The nations are in different positions than the trends observed previously with both GDP and GDP (PPP). This is because it measures the amount of GDP (PPP) per household instead of the state as a whole. With population in mind, China, Brazil, and India respectively fall third to last, second to last, and last place. Even though China has had significant growth compared to Brazil and India, it is nowhere near states which we refer to as 'developed'. This shows how misleading strictly studying the economic indicators are without taking into consideration how the wealth is being distributed.   The nations that stand in the top eight slots, which concurrently are G8 members, have been considered international leaders for a significant amount of time, which may explain the gap between them and the newly rising nations. However, this gap reaffirms the positions in the international system by showing that each of these states have prosperous economies for the respective populations. Also, the United States is not the dominant state in this measure as it is only a small amount ahead of the lesser states. The United States loses its share to China and Russia. Overall, the GDP per capita (PPP) displays that there is much less structural changes, which affirms the existing international system.



Figure 1-4: GDP per capita (PPP) of Major States from 1994 until 2012

Data is from: The World Bank DataBank: GDP per capita, PPP (current international $), last modified 2014, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx.

## Conclusion

The cumulative changes expressed in the GDP and GDP (PPP) of these states show a need for a power shift to adjust to the new powers. A clear example of this is the misalignment of the G8 member states and those who hold the top eight ranking positions. However, when this idea is paired with the data shown in GDP per capita (PPP), this is less obvious. The structure expressed with GDP per capita (PPP) reaffirms the international structure that has dominated for centuries. If this measure aligned with the other two, the actual role and the need for changes in the potential role would be more obvious. This being said, this measure has slower rate of change than that of the other two and does not make the structural changes displayed initially irrelevant. This is seen with China's slow growth per capita. In actual and relative GDP terms alone, the United States may be facing relative decline as China is rising at a much quicker rate than any other nation. For the actual-potential roles to be aligned, these changes must be occurring in all of the other factors at well. If these roles are not aligned, the international system is unstable. The structural indicator is used to determine the potential role of the states as well as influencing the actual role of each state. The United States is being forced into relative decline. This means that the potential foreign policy role the United States can sustain in the international structure needs to contract.

This will be seen as a contraction or stabilization of its operational budget, less eagerness to intervene or engage in foreign affairs, and more group efforts and decisions. Due to China's expansive GDP, it's ascribed, operational, declaratory, and functional roles must all be expanding. That means that the international structure should be allotting China a more influential decision making role per China's declaratory request.

One way of doing this is by expanding China's membership into more internationally exclusive groups. However, these conclusions are only preliminary and need the other indicators to become more conclusive. The other indicators will affect the conclusions by allowing us to understand if China is just misaligned, or if it has seem vast improvements across the board. These potential changes call into question the United States' future role within the system and the amount of power that will be allocated to it in the future by international entities.

## *Future Direction*

This concept would be more conclusive it included more indicators to assess the states. My next step will be to complete the rest of the indicators and begin to compare them against each other to develop actual and potential definitions for China and the United States. I would like to add indicators to expose discrepancies in international funding, declared roles, and assigned roles. I would also like to measure the role and capacity of non-governmental agencies in the international system. These agencies range from the UN, World Bank, IMF to organizations like the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and other prominent terrorist groups. This layout seems to ignore the influences these organizations have on conserving or destroying the current structure of the international system and the likelihood of international actors to trust the states.

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