



China's involvement in international environmental protection

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore how China involves itself in international environmental protection and why such a response has come into being. The spillover effect of environmental problems deepens the interdependence of all countries and requires more international cooperation. China's positive or negative action on the environment will generate a global impact due to its huge size of population, the status of top emitter of carbon dioxide, worsening environmental situation, and increasing demands for energy. In this light, understanding China's response to international environmental protection is of great significance. This is the underlying motivation for this paper. In order to obtain a possible answer, three theories have been used based on reliable empirical data.

First, the identity theory provides an explanation for China's involvement in international environmental issues from a constructivist perspective. It seems China's current participation is somewhere between the passive and the active, moving towards the latter. Identities of a socialist country and a developing country determine that China could not be fully involved in global environmental protection while its desire to be identified as a responsible great power requires it to do so.

Then, the logic of two-level games draw from Robert D. Putnam is applied to shed light on how China's decision-makers strive to reconcile domestic and international imperatives simultaneously in the negotiation of mitigating climate change. The case shows that relatively centralized model of decision-making, symbolic ratification procedures and strategies used play important roles although the divergence of interests among different groups exists.

And third, the term of interests is employed to clarify four possible factors which influence China's involvement in a more detailed way, namely China's environmental degradation and ecological vulnerability, political concerns, economic costs and the national image. They work together in China's international policy. Political concerns

including keeping domestic social stability and securing autonomy are among the top priorities. Economic development is also ahead of environmental protection. The complexity not only lies in the priority among these factors, but also reflects in contradictions within some factors. Generally, as a developing country, China shows more enthusiasm for interests that can be realized in a short time.

Key words: China, international environmental protection, identity, interests, the logic of two-level games

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Environmental issues have emerged as one of the most severe challenges humankind has to cope with carefully in contemporary and future world. The principal danger of environmental problems lies in that “they present risks within the state where it originates, to that state’s neighbors and, possibly, the global commons”. (Ross 1998: 809) This property attributes environmental issues to appear onto the global scene. Widespread international cooperation is required to address them, especially climate change. In addition, environmental problems may pose a menace to the survival of future generations. Once the environment has been destroyed, it is difficult to restore to its original appearance. Environment affairs are so complicated that it is almost impossible to deal with them within an isolated field. Substantial participation from all stakeholders is required in response to global increasingly serious environmental challenges. However, they often the game of related parties As Chasek argues:

“Environmental issues, which combine scientific uncertainty, citizen and industry activism, politics, and economics, may be among the most complicated and difficult to resolve. ... Discussions about the best ways of enforcing treaties often fall victim to political rivalries and national sovereignty concerns.”

(Chasek 2001: 2)

As a developing country with ongoing widespread industrialization and urbanization, China is faced with mounting environmental pressure when cheering for its sustained rapid economic growth. To some extent, China’s experience is in accordance with the development history of many industrialized countries, but the fact that various environmental problems, which appear step by step during more

than two hundred years in industrialized countries, break out at a relatively short period of only three decades makes China pressure more. China has the most population of more than 1.3 billion in the world and China's economy keeps growing at the fastest rate of any major states, about 8%-9% annually for three decades. (Liu & Diamond 2005: 1179) The sheer size of population and accelerated economic growth has constituted serious challenges to China's ecologic environment. These challenges are presented ranging from serious soil erosion, decrease of cultivated lands, cropland losses, deforestation, water shortage and contamination, air pollution, increasingly frequent floods and draughts, sharp loss of biodiversity, depleted fisheries, desertification, disappearing wetlands, and grassland degradation, to invasive species, overgrazing, interrupted river flow, salinization, trash accumulation and etc. (Liu & Diamond 2005: 1179) In August 2012, the Asian Development Bank has issued a report titled "Toward an Environmentally Sustainable Future: Country Environmental Analysis of the People's Republic of China", in which shows that seven out of the most ten polluted cities in the world are located in China, and among five hundred big cities in China, less than one percent have caught up to the air quality standards of the World Health Organization (Asian Development Bank 2012: 55). The environmental degradation not only threatens the health of people, but also causes huge economic losses. Additionally, the appearance of numbers of mass incidents is triggered by environmental problems in many cases. Environmental issues have begun to menace social stability which always prioritizes over every other thing in the agenda of Chinese government.

As mentioned above, environmental problems have spillover effects. Their influence usually goes beyond the borders. Sandstorms originated from Mongolia and North China not merely affect these two countries, but also cause troubles in Japan and South Korea. (Ruan 2007: 117) The toxic benzene into the Songhua River in Northeast China posed threatens to both Chinese and Russians living along the downstream within the Russian border. Hydroelectric dams in China's southwest

Yunnan province have severely influenced the people living downstream of the Mekong River in Laos, Thailand, Burma and Vietnam. The acid rain, which is principally caused by high emission of particulates and sulphur dioxide due to China's widespread use of coal, has imperiled forestry and agriculture both in China and its neighboring countries. China should also play a responsible role when combating global climate change because it has already overtaken the US, as the top emitter of carbon dioxide (CO₂) since 2007 and the emission continues to rise. (Zang 2010: 545)

In the meantime, increasing demands for energy and resources along with the process of China's rapid industrialization and urbanization in recent years implies more damage to the environment. As World Development Indicator 2012 released by the World Bank shows, "Growing populations and expanding economies have placed greater demands on land, water, forests, minerals, and energy resources" in China. (World Bank 2013a: 137) Since the global financial crisis, China has enacted a number of steps to offset the disadvantageous effects and recover the economy. Driven by large-scale domestic investment on infrastructure and increasing consumption, China's demand for energy and some heavily polluted materials such as cement appears to grow strongly and attention to environmental impact has been declined to a certain extent. According to British Petroleum (BP) Statistical Review of World Energy released in June, 2012, in 2011 China's primary energy consumption has reached to 2613.2 million tones oil equivalent, 8.8% over 2010, overtaking the US as the leading country of energy consumption in the world. (British Petroleum 2012: 40) China's energy consumption remains huge increase. China's future development is deeply threatened by environmental degradation and energy shortage. In the 2013 edition of BP's Energy Outlook 2030, China is predicted to "be on pace to match Europe as the world's leading energy importer by 2030, and replace the US as the world's largest oil importing nation by 2017". (British Petroleum 2013: 75) Such a situation definitely brings about new challenges to China's domestic environment and the global commons.

China's government has realized the necessity and urgency to take vigorous initiatives to improve the present environmental situation. Large numbers of environmental laws and regulations have been issued and more kinds of measures and approaches have been taken although their implementation has been often questioned. Along with the increase of public environmental awareness, China's government holds a relatively tolerated attitude towards environmental NGOs than those working on areas of human rights or democracy. (Chan et al. 2008: 300) The rapid development of internet also plays an important role in this progress. More money has been invested in environmental protection including developing renewable energy and environment-friendly technologies, improving energy efficiency and controlling pollution. Promoting ecological progress has been equally positioned with the social economic, political, cultural, social development in the report of the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China in November, 2012. However, China's leader insists that "the principal problem in China is still that production falls short of the ever-growing material and cultural needs of the people", and development is still the key to solving all China's problems. (China Daily 2012) In this light, handling the contradictions between economic development and environmental protection properly still remains problematic.

China's involvement in international environmental protection is resulted from not only the domestic pressure; internationally, China is also stressful since what it does or does not do will bring about a significant global impact. (Chan et al 2008: 292) Chinese leaders have realized that China may fundamentally benefit from participating in international efforts to turn the world green. Over the past three decades, China has developed extensively bilateral and multilateral cooperation with concerned parties on regional and global major environmental issues. (Xie 2011: 220) For example, in 2002, along with some international organizations, China, Mongolia, Japan and South Korea established a joint governance group to control the raging sandstorms and it still works. (Ruan 2007: 118-119) In the same year, China has also ratified the Kyoto Protocol. However, based on China's current economic

development, it is impossible for China to devote itself entirely to environmental protection. China's participation in the negotiation of mitigating climate change presents a case to this point. In addition, it seems that China's leaders think that it will make a great contribution to the global environmental improvement if it can appropriately cope with its over-burdened population and domestic environmental problems. (Chan et al 2008: 292) This cognition partly results in prudent actions in China's global environmental governance.

1.2 Problem Formulation

How China involves itself in international environmental protection and why such a response has come into being.

As stated before, environmental problems have been widely acknowledged as one of the most serious challenges mankind face in contemporary and future world. As a result, environmental issues have become one of the main concerns in international relations in recent years. (Zhang 1998: 12) In such a context, along with China's unprecedented economic growth, the huge size of population of over 1.3 billion, the status as the top emitter of carbon dioxide since 2007, the worsening environmental situation, and increasing demands for energy have positioned China as one of the most crucial roles in response to global environmental challenges. What China do or does not do in the environmental area will generate a great impact on itself as well as the rest of the world. (Chan et al. 2008: 292) Therefore, understanding China's attitudes and actions on international environmental issues and exploring reasons why such a response has come into being is of great significance.

Environment protection has never been a pure concept; instead, it is a complex matter combining closely with politics, economics, society, science and technology, ethics and culture, international relations and etc. In order to move towards a possible answer for the problem formulation above, some sub-questions should be carefully considered. What is China's response to international environmental

protection? Is there any change from the past until quite recently? How does Chinese government reconcile domestic and international imperatives in the international environmental negotiation? How does China identify itself in the global environment protection? What factors influence China's current response? Is there any contradiction among these factors in practice? Which one is the primary consideration?

2. Methodology

This section concerning the methodology of the thesis will illustrate how the problem formulation will be approached and answered. The purpose of this part is to identify the logic, internal reasoning and further proceeding of this thesis, and better provide readers with an understanding of how I have come to my conclusion. It consists of three parts. The first part will in short go through two methodological approaches which can solidify the systematic tactic to the analysis and research. Subsequent to this, the second part will present which type of data will be used and how they have been collected. It also contains an account on reasons why the specific case has been chosen. The reasons for specifically choosing the three theories I am working with will be explained briefly in the third part. At last, the structure of the paper will be clarified to help readers obtain a whole picture.

2.1 Dialectic and Synergetic Approaches

Approaches used set one of the key foundations for a qualified research. In order to organize and broaden my thinking on China's international environmental response, two approaches will be used, namely the dialectics and the synergy.

The dialectic thinking helps to gain a full picture because what things being in this way may be looked different from another perspective. This approach guides me to examine factors influencing China's involvement in international environmental protection in a more deliberate and object way. Taking economic costs as an example, it will slow down China's economic growth if stricter measures of environmental protection have been conducted in a short time while in a long run, the losses of environmental degradation will reduce. The dialectic approach gives a complete insight and avoids a one-sided bias.

Everything is connected to something else. China's international environmental policies are resulted from interactions among diversified actors at both domestic and

international levels. The synergetic approach provides a way of thinking to broaden my vision and uncover the underlying issues of China's involvement in international environmental protection as far as possible.

2.2 Data Collection and Case Study

In order to answer the problem formulation stated before, both qualitative and quantitative data will be used. The paper is relying completely on secondary sources of data and information since it is almost impossible for a person to get accurate primary data at a national or international level, such as China's per capita emissions and etc. These data have been collected in academic articles, specialized reports from World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the industry like British Petroleum (BP), official reports from Chinese government, publications, reliable websites, media, and lecture notes of professors. I especially pay attention to the reliability and validity of statistics. As a result, some quantitative data may be not so updated. Another constraint of relying on secondary data is that most data is collected for a specific purpose, not exactly fit my research.

As a native Chinese speaker, I have had the advantage of being able to search through both English and Chinese databases so that I can get more perspectives than those who only have access to English materials. This will contribute a lot to a more nuanced and objective analysis. In addition, this advantage has been shown more clearly when doing historical review and case study, because there are not enough literatures in English recording the details about them.

In terms of case study, China's standpoints and actions in the negotiation of mitigating climate change is picked up and the logic of two-level games will be applied to explore how China's government strives to reconcile domestic and international imperatives simultaneously. Two reasons can explain why I chose this specific case. One is that the climate issue presents as the main form of international environmental cooperation and China plays an important role in it. The other is that

China's involvement in climate change negotiations provides a good example to understand how China's international environmental policies have come into being under dual pressure from domestic constituencies and the international community.

2.3 Use of Theories

In order to make the thesis more convincing and more organized, three theories have been chosen, namely identity theory, the term of interests and the logic of two-level games. On the one hand, identities and corresponding interests from a constructivism perspective can provide an explanation why China makes a current reaction to international environmental protection. On the other hand, the logic of two-games helps explore how such a response comes into being by taking both domestic context and international politics into consideration. These three theories will be actually applied in an entangled way because they support to explain why the case is as it is from different perspectives. More details about these three theories and their application will be introduced and elaborated in the theory section.

2.4 The Structure of the Thesis

In order to answer the problem formulation mentioned previously, this thesis is structured by the following five sections: introduction, methodology, theory, analysis and conclusion.

As the first section, the introduction serves as an opening to the thesis by presenting some relevant background information. It briefly introduces the complexity of environmental problems, environmental challenges, especially the challenge of increasing energy demands China faces, China's domestic response to environmental issues and participation in international environmental protection. After that, the problem formulation of this thesis with some sub-questions is presented.

Subsequent to the introduction, the second part is covering methodological considerations. As mentioned earlier, the section aims to illustrate how the problem

formulation will be approached and answered. I will present two approaches used; explain data collection and reasons for the choice of case study; briefly introduce the three theories applied; and clarify the structure of the thesis.

The third section will be applied to introduce three theories used in my analysis. They are the identity theory, the term of interests and the logic of two-level games, respectively. The first two theories are both elaborated by Alexander Wendt in a constructivism perspective and there exists an intrinsic link between them. The logic of two-level games is drawn from Robert D. Putnam. These theories are explained, elaborated and expanded from their general definitions and principles to the reasoning why and how they can help to strengthen my argument and further understand the problem formulation in a theoretical manner.

The fourth section is the analysis which is the most important part of the paper. This is where I am using the theories presented earlier to answer the research question. It consists of five main parts. This section starts with a brief reviews on China's historical change from denial to internalization of environmental protection. The identity theory will be applied to explain the transition presented in the second part. Three identities China maintains will be examined: a socialist country with market economy, the largest developing country in the world and a participator in the existing international system, respectively. The third part aims to discuss how the change of attitudes towards environmental protection forms in which social learning will be used. A case study is followed in the fourth part. The logic of two-level games will be applied to shed light on how China's decision-makers strive to reconcile domestic and international imperatives simultaneously in the negotiation of mitigating climate change. Specifically, China's role in mitigating climate change, continuity and changes of its position, China's negotiators, China's domestic context and China's strategies used at both domestic and international levels will be discussed. The final section of analysis is dedicated to exploring factors which influence China's engagement in international environmental protection based on

the case study and other things. Four general interests will be discussed, namely China's environmental degradation and ecological vulnerability, political concerns, economic costs and the national image.

The conclusion of this thesis will be demonstrated in the last section based on the above four sections.

3. Theory

This section will be applied to introduce three theories used in my analysis. As mentioned previously, the theories are explained, elaborated and expanded from their general definitions and principles to the reasoning why and how they can help to strengthen my argument and further understand the problem formulation in a theoretical manner. The first two theories are both elaborated by Alexander Wendt in a constructivism perspective and there exists an intrinsic link between them. First presented is the identity theory with emphasis on its definition, categories and formation. Following this is the illustration of the term of interests. The relationship of identities and interests, the distinction between objective and subjective interests, and four types of national interests are introduced. The last one is the logic of two-level games for domestic-international interactions developed by Robert D. Putnam. The application of these three theories chosen will be illustrated at the end of each part respectively. However, it should be noted that they actually work in an entangled manner because they support to explain why the case is as it is from different perspectives.

3.1 Identity Theory

Identity is a main concept in different branches of constructivism theories and a political action is usually explained by referring to the identity of a country. Interests are constructed socially and the interests of a state depend on its identity. (Karimifard 2012: 239-242) Identity can be defined as “the state of being similar to some actors and different from others in a particular circumstance. Identity involves the creation of boundaries that separate self from other.” Social structures, like shared knowledge and social norms, constitute states with particular identities and interests. (Brittingham 2007: 149) As a matter of fact, what identity indicates and contains are various kinds of relations.

Alexander Wendt regards identity as “a property of intentional actors that generates

motivational and behavioral dispositions". (Wendt 2005: 224) He divides identities into four categories: (a) personal or corporate, (b) type, (c) role, and (d) collective. Personal or corporate identity makes an actor distinct from others; one actor can have only one such identity while other three identities can take multiple forms simultaneously within one actor. (Wendt 2005: 224-230) In line with Wendt, the term of type identity refers to a social category or "label applied to persons who share or are thought to share some characteristics such as behavioral traits, values, historical commonalities". (Abbott as quoted in Wendt 2005: 225) However, not all shared characteristics, only those with social content or meaning count as a type identity. (Wendt 2005: 225-226) For a state, a type identity corresponds to "regime types" or "forms of state". (Cox as quoted in Wendt 2005: 226) These two kinds of identities both rely more on relations and conditions within actors than with other counterparts. (Xia 2006: 75-76) In contrast, role identities only exist in relation to others and also indicate certain expectations. What really defines roles is the degree of interdependence between self and other. The collective identity leads to identification which the boundary between self and other becomes blurred, but generally issue-specific and rarely total. (Wendt 2005: 227-230)

As to how the identity forms, Alexander Wendt introduces two logics – natural selection and cultural selection. In this thesis, cultural selection is emphasized. According to Wendt, cultural selection is equivalent to what sociologists call "socialization"; it works directly through actors' capacities for cognition, rationality and intentionality. There are two mechanisms of cultural selection, namely imitation and social learning. The latter is the main concern in this thesis. Wendt argues constructivism highlights a kind of "complex learning", which enables actors to realize their identities and interests more effectively, and learning itself has construction effects on identities and interests. Specifically, "identities and their corresponding interests are learned and then reinforced in response to how actors are treated by significant others." (Wendt 2005: 327) The principle here is the well-known "reflected appraisals" or "mirroring", which suggests that one actor is

likely to internalize the belief what others see him. (Wendt 2005: 318-328) A change may occur in the view of decision makers on specific issues along with the updating of knowledge, social learning and the spread of certain ideas.

Wendt uses an interactionist framework to explain the process of complex learning. He divides social learning into two issues: “what actors bring with them to interaction and how they learn identities once they get there”. (Wendt 2005: 328) The former, including some materials and ideas with a volitional character, is the starting point for the following interaction. Conflict is in a higher potential than congruence for the first time since there is little shared knowledge when actors encounter initially. The first encounter decides the logic of later interaction. The process of interaction can be broken down into four scenes: Ego employing actions based on the definition of the situation, Alter’s own interpretation of Ego’s action guided by his information, Alter’s corresponding action, Ego’s interpretation and reaction, respectively. Ideas are eventually shared through interaction. Wendt regards power as a crucial element in determining the moving direction of this interaction. Both sides try to get the other compromised and thought in its own way. (Wendt 2005: 328-331)

For the purpose of this paper, identity will be used as an important theoretical framework to characterize the Chinese attitudes, standpoints and actions on the global environment arena. Specifically, three identities of China are crucial. The first two are type identities and the third one can be seen as a role identity. First, China identifies itself as a socialist country, which implies the boundary separating self from other (the mainstream of capitalism in the world) is much clearer when involving in the world. As a result, the misunderstanding and distrust concerning almost all aspects are in a higher potential even though “China has, to all intents and purposes, become an integral part of the world” (Chan et al 2008: 292). Environmental protection is no exception. And the second identity is that China is a developing country all along, so China’s engagement in global environmental

protection needs to be more in line with its domestic conditions, especially the right of development, rather than the seemingly over-burdened international responsibility widely expected. The third is that China wants to involve in the existing system, even to be a responsible great power. There exist some paradoxes among these three mentioned identities. For example, China's insisting on the principle of "common but differential responsibilities" as a developing country disappoints the international expectation, which hinder its integration into the world. So we can see that Beijing has repeatedly stressed that China is and will continue to actively participate in international cooperation to respond to global climate change while it has refused to accept any binding emission reduction quotas. In addition, the possible cognitive differences about China's identities between itself and those states who expect more on China may deepen the mutual mistrust that has already existed and lead to some new disagreements. Indeed, it seems that these three identities can explain China's international actions in most cases; hence this explanation may be not so convincing and targeted. However, they are necessary to be discussed because it is these three identities that constitute the starting point and foundation for understanding China's response to international environmental issues.

Social learning will also help to provide an explanation of China's changing response to environmental protection. What drives China's participation, to a large extent, lies in the evolution of ideas based on a deepening scientific understanding of the environment, direct and indirect perception of environment degradation around and the spread of international norms through interacting with diversified entities.

3.2 The Construction of Interests by Ideas

According to Wendt, interest is not a priori existing; instead, it is socially constructed by ideas on the basis of cognition and deliberation. He argues that ideas construct interests even in some cases ideas themselves are interests though not all ideas are interests. (Wendt 2005: 113-115) Interests refer to what actors want while identities

refer to who actors are. "Interests presuppose identities because an actor cannot know what it wants until it knows who it is... without interests identities have no motivational force, without identities interests have no direction." They work in tandem as complementary explanatory roles with each other. (Wendt 2005: 231)

The social theory distinguishes two types of interests, objective and subjective. The former refers to the needs or functional imperatives and the latter means beliefs which "actors have about how to meet their identity needs or think it possible to attain". The subjective interest is actually equivalent to "preferences" or "desire". (Wendt 2005: 231-232) Subjective interests are "preferences over outcomes" instead of "preference over strategies". (Powell as quoted in Wendt 2005: 232) Identities will be lost if actors fail to realize and act on them, so one of the key problems actors face is align subjective and objective interests. (Wendt 2005: 232)

Specific to states, they are "actors whose behavior is motivated by a variety of interests rooted in corporate, type, role and collective identities"; interests "refer to the reproduction requirements or security of state-society complexes". (Wendt 2005: 234) Obviously, this definition is based on an objective dimension. Wendt stresses that "objective national interests are not merely normative guidelines for action, but causal powers that predispose states to act in certain ways". (Wendt 2005: 234) Wendt identifies four kinds of national interests: physical survival, autonomy, economic well-being, and collective self-esteem. Physical survival concerns more about the survival of the state-society complex. "Autonomy refers to the ability of a state-society complex to exercise control over its allocation of resources and choice of government" (Wendt 2005: 235), and it is related to a state's abilities to "meet internal demands or react to contingencies". Economic well-being implies an interest in economic growth in most cases while "there may yet come a day that national interests requires a different articulation of well-being" as the world is nearing its ecological carrying capacity. (Wendt 2005: 236) Collective self-esteem can be seen as an extension of individuals' basic need to seeking in group membership. "A key

factor is whether collective self-images are positive or negative.” (Wendt 2005: 236) Negative images are often perceived through other country's disregard or humiliation. States “will compensate by self-assertion and/or devaluation and aggression toward the other” when they are not able to have long endured such images. On the contrary, a positive image tends to make states be placid since it usually “emerges from mutual respect and cooperation”. (Wendt 2005: 235-237)

If state – society complexes are to get secure, these four types of interests mentioned must be met. They may sometimes be incompatible; therewith priorities have to be considered under given situations. In this respect, they act as a kind of selection mechanism. However, all these four interests must be met in the long term for the purpose of being secure. The significance lies in that they offer states a way to realize their interests, understand their implications and define subjective interests accordingly. States can interpret their interests in different ways, but this does not mean that states can be free to construct interests. (Wendt 2005: 233-238) Clearly, states tend to meet the domestic interest claims before those of foreigners since states politically depend on domestic constituencies. (Wendt 2005: 241)

As to action, Wendt borrows the model from Martin Hollis and G.F. Schueler: “desire (or interests) plus belief plus reason equals action”. He thinks it is particularly appropriate when explaining actions in international relations. (Wendt 2005: 126) Desire (or interests) refers to what an actor wants; belief implies what he thinks it possible to attain; and reason means actions are employed on the basis of deliberation. (Wendt 2005: 232)

The term of interests will be applied to my analysis as a basic concept. First, the adoption of such international environmental policies is based on the cognition of interests. The possible interests China has perceived and probably attain constitute the key to explaining China's standpoints and actions in international environmental protection, as the model demonstrates, “desire (or interests) plus belief plus reason equals action”. China realizes that turning itself green by engaging in the

international cooperation is in accordance with its national interests and it can benefit from this involvement though there may be some losses simultaneously. The recognition of interests also helps to review China's changing standpoint in the environmental protection from a historical perspective.

Following this logic, what needs to be addressed is to identify interests. Wendt's four types of national interests provide a frame to consider it. The case of China's position in the negotiation of climate change can be partly explained by national interests. Combined this case study with other factors, this paper will try to identify China's four interests, which account for its involvement in international environmental protection, namely China's environmental degradation and ecological vulnerability, political concerns, economic costs and the national image. These four interests have been reflected in both domestic and international spheres and constitute "causal powers" for China's actions. They are deeply rooted in domestic conditions and also derived from the increasing international pressure.

Finally, in most cases, interests work jointly instead of alone on China's international environmental policy-making. However, when discussing these four kinds of interests, some contradictions among them are found out, which implies the prioritization and selection of interests in a given situation. Besides, the difference between objective and subjective interests can also be applied to provide an explanation to the prioritization because some interests can be realized in a short time and some may not.

3.3 The Logic of Two-level Games

There is no doubt that domestic politics and international relations often get entangled with each other. So the real question is "HOW" instead of "WHETHER". In 1988, Putnam proposed the logic of two-level games by analyzing the dynamics and outcome of the Bonn economic summit of 1978, offering a theoretical answer to the "How" question. (Putnam 1988: 427) Two-level games concern the direct interaction

between inter-state and intra-state bargaining. It is of great significance in explaining the diplomatic decision-making and studying the interaction between international politics and domestic politics. (Bo 2003: 54)

The model of two-level games assumes that generally, politicians engaging in international negotiations are trying to do two things at the same time, negotiating with their counterparts at international level and bargaining with domestic diversified entities at the national level. "Each national political leader appears at both game boards." (Putnam 1988: 434) Putnam calls the process of international negotiations, which leads to a tentative agreement Level I, and the course of bargaining with domestic constituents about whether to ratify the agreement Level II. At level I, politicians struggle for maximizing the national interests while minimizing the adverse consequences; at level II, interest groups always pressure the government to take their preferred policies and politicians pursue their own power by establishing alliance with these groups. (Putnam 1988: 434-436) The actors at level II may represent bureaucratic agencies, interest groups, social classes, or even "public opinion". "The requirement that any Level I agreement must, in the end, be ratified at Level II imposes a crucial theoretical link between the two levels." (Putnam 1988: 436) Putnam also points out that such a division on process is for the purpose of the convenience and simplification of analysis. In practice, these two stages are often intertwined and occur simultaneously because the expectations and development at either level will affect negotiations in the other field. It is common that politicians have already consulted or bargained with domestic constituencies before the first level. (Putnam 1988: 436)

Putnam stresses the importance of the term of "win-sets". He defines the "win-sets" as "a given Level II constituency as the set of all possible Level I agreements that would 'win'—that is, gain the necessary majority among the constituents." (Putnam 1988: 437) Two deductions are important: "larger win-sets make Level I agreement more likely, *ceteris paribus*"; the relative size of the respective Level II win-sets will

affect “the distribution of the joint gains from the international bargain”. (Putnam 1988)

According to Putnam, the size of win-sets depends on three especially crucial sets of factors:

- Level II preferences and coalitions
- Level II political institutions
- Level I negotiators’ strategies (Putnam 1988: 442)

The first set of determinants includes the distribution of power, preferences, and possible coalitions among Level II constituents. Three aspects will affect this set of factors, namely costs of different groups in case of the ratification of agreements, the power contrast between the domestic support and opposition to the international cooperation, and the homogeneous or heterogeneous preference of domestic constituencies for agreements. Negotiators should adopt different strategies to bargain with them accordingly. It should be noted that “participation rates vary across groups and across issues, and this variation often has implications for the size of the win-set”. (Putnam 1988: 442-447)

Political institutions also constrain the size of win-sets. The political system and ratification procedures clearly have an impact on the win-sets. For instance, the separation of powers of U.S. imposes greater restrictions to the win-sets than other countries. It will increase the bargaining ability of U.S. negotiators at international level, but reduce the possibility for achieving international cooperation. Another example is the win-sets will be smaller in a case of two-thirds vote required than a simple majority. In addition, the greater autonomy decision-makers granted from the voters, the bigger win-sets and it is more likely to reach international agreements. However, the analysis of two-level games also implies that greater autonomy and less domestic pressures will put a country in a weaker position in

international negotiations. (Putnam 1988: 447-450)

The third set of factors refers to strategies negotiators use in the bargaining at home and abroad. Many domestic strategies can also be applied at the international tables. For example, negotiators could compensate for the domestic constituencies by side-payments to expand their own win-sets, which is not rare at the international sphere. Defining the issue is another effective bargaining tactics to enlarge the win-sets. Specific measures include: amplify domestic issues into the international stage to attract public attention and improve the participation rate; define the issue in a broader scope, such as linking it with the national core values and essential interests and etc. (Wong 2001: 32)

The role of the single leader or chief negotiator as the only formal link between Level I and Level II" is emphasized in two-level games. In order to simplify the model, the chief negotiator is assumed to behave as an honest agent or representative of his constituents without his own policy preferences and independent views. (Putnam 1988: 435-436) He is striving to reconcile domestic and international imperatives during the double-edged negotiations. However, in practice, just as Putnam points out at the end of his paper, this assumption is proved to be unrealistic. The chief negotiator is usually motivated by the desires such as enhancing his standing in the domestic game, facilitating policies that he privately wish to do but are powerless to do domestically, and realizing the national interest in the international context on the basis of his own understanding. (Putnam 1988: 457)

Two-level games have already been applied to a number of case studies ranging from diplomatic decision-making, security issues, to economic diplomacy, North-South relations, which attest to the influence of the model on empirical studies. (Savage & Weale 2009: 63-64) However, the model has also been criticized because of certain limitations. For example, on the one hand, Putnam does not demonstrate how to adjust the inherent logic of two-level games taking the policy preferences of negotiators into consideration although he has already noticed it. On

the other hand, if taken preferences of negotiators into account, its original simplicity during analysis will suffer challenges. Therefore the model of two-level games has been caught in an intrinsic dilemma. (Bo 2003: 58-59) In addition, as James E. Dougherty, Robert L. Pfaltzgraff Jr. remind, the vast majority of decision theories developed in the United States, including the two-level games, are concerned about the U.S. political situation specifically. Nevertheless, the decision-making process within different political systems varies a lot. Therefore, the abuse of these theories will lead to a wrong understanding. (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff 2003: 645-646)

Environmental issues are entangled with diversified fields such as politics, economics, society, culture and etc. The transnational property of environmental issues makes it be related to both domestic and foreign affairs. In this thesis, this model will be applied to illustrate how China's government strives to balance interests at both domestic and international levels in the negotiation of climate change with a focus on intra-state condition. The win-sets will be explored carefully by presenting China's domestic political system, ratification procedures and strategies used. Different from Putnam's assumption that negotiators are honest on behalf of domestic main interest groups, this paper looks upon negotiators as an entity participating directly in the game at the national level with individual political preferences and domestic interests; their bargaining with other domestic entities also influence the size of win-sets. Therefore, in this case, it is important how politicians set ratification procedures and what strategies they use to facilitate decision-making in favor of their preferences while meeting requirements of diversified entities at both domestic and international levels.

4. Analysis

This part can be divided into five main parts. It starts with a brief reviews on China's historical change regard to environmental protection from denial to internalization. Then the identity theory will be applied to explain the transition presented above in the second part. Subsequent to this, the third part will discuss how the transition forms in which social learning will be used. A case study is followed, in which the logic of two-level games will be applied to shed light on how China's decision-makers strive to reconcile domestic and international imperatives simultaneously in the negotiation of mitigating climate change. The final section is dedicated to exploring the four factors which influence China's engagement in international environmental protection based on the case study and other things.

4.1 China's Involvement in Environmental Protection: from Denial to Internalization

China's involvement in environmental protection can be traced back to early 1970s. It emerged being accompanied by China's diplomacy and its rise was equipped with certain accidental factors in an objective sense. (Wang 2011: 2) The year of 1972 can be seen as a watershed in China's response to environment issues. In 1972, China sent a delegation to participate in the UN Conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm, less than one year after the recovery of the legal status in the UN. (Chan et al 2008: 293) China denied the existence of environmental problems and regarded it as a tool created by imperialist countries to repress the third world countries. (Schroeder 2008: 511)

However, it is in this conference that China's government, especially top leaders such as the Prime Minister Zhou Enlai at that time, was impressed by the danger of global environmental degradation and began to face up with domestic

environmental problems. The opening of China's first national Conference on Environmental Protection in 1973 and the establishment of the Environmental Protection Leadership Group, which would later evolved into the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) in 1988, and in 2008 became the Ministry of Environmental Protection, suggest that "China's official stance in environmental negotiations changed slightly". (Schroeder 2008: 511) China passed the Environmental Protection Law for Trial Implementation in 1979. Environmental protection was elevated as one of China's basic national policies in 1994. The 1982 Constitution accommodates environmental protection provisions. Article 26 of the Constitution says, "The state protects and improves the environment in which people live and the ecological environment." By the end of 2006, more than 200 environmental policies, laws, and regulations had been proposed and enacted, including Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law (1984), Air Pollution Prevention and Control Law (1987), The Water and Soil Conservation Law (1991), The Solid Waste Law (1995), first five-year plan on environmental protection (1996) and etc. (Christensen 2012)

While a series of measures for addressing its own environmental problems have been taken, China's participation in international environmental affairs also has become relatively active since the Stockholm Conference. In 1973, China was elected to be a council member of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and three years later, China set up the Permanent Mission of the UNEP to strengthen communication and coordination between China and international environmental institutions. (Ma 2011: 154) In 1992, China's Prime Minister Li Peng delivered a speech at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, systematically expounding on China's five principles on global environment problems:

(1) China consistently holds that economic development should be coordinated with environmental protection;

(2) Protection of the environment is a common task for mankind, but the economically developed countries should take more responsibility in this respect;

(3) The strengthening of international cooperation should be based on respecting national sovereignty;

(4) The protection of the environment and the spurring of development cannot be done without peace and stability in the world;

(5) Both practical interests of various countries and long-term interests of the world should be considered in handling environmental problems.

(XinhuaNet 1996)

Guided by these principles, more and deeper multilateral and bilateral cooperation have been strengthened. According to statistics from the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China, the number of international environmental conventions, which China has signed or ratified, has reached to fifty by October of 2003. (Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People's Republic of China 2003) China ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2002. In 2001, China and the EU agreed to establish a ministerial-level dialogue mechanism on China-EU environmental policies and so far the ministerial meetings have been held four times. China and the UK signed a "Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the Sino-British Energy Working Group" in 2006. Documents such as "the Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in Technology and Mechanism Concerning Africa's Environment", and "the Implementation Agreement of Environmental Cooperation Projects in Africa" were signed to promote cooperation among developing countries. China promotes bilateral and multilateral cooperation by deepening cooperation with concerned parties including both developed and developing countries through "multichannel, multilayered and diverse exchanges". (National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China 2012a:78-80)

4.2 China's Identities

4.2.1 China's Type Identities

As elaborated in the theory part, the term of type identity refers to a social category, which can be used to label persons who share or are thought to share some characteristics with social contents or meaning. One actor can have multiple type identities simultaneously. For a state, a type identity corresponds to “regime types” or “forms of state”. Type identities are with more intrinsic features compared with role and collective identities. As a result, type identities are relatively stable. Exploring China's response to international environmental protection from this perspective, two kinds of type identities are crucial, one is China identifies itself as a socialist country with market economy, and the other is China's international position as the largest developing country in the world still remains.

China is a socialist country since its establishment in 1949, which implies huge difference in terms of the social system and ideology with the capitalism-dominated international community. Guided by the idea that the world was experiencing widespread revolutions, the foreign policy of newly-established China bore a strong ideological sense and it was mainly reflected in standing firmly on the side of the socialist camp. With the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relation in 1960s, China's diplomatic policy was readjusted to struggle against both imperialism and revisionism. China regarded itself as an example and the leading role among third world countries. Such a self-identity with an emphasis on revolution and ideological difference is partly because of the severe international situation of the time; on the other hand, to a large extent, it is deeply rooted in the identity of a victim being oppressed, which was formed in China's long-term practice of struggling for independence and liberation. The establishment of this identity makes China stay far away from the international system led by Western countries. As a result, China's international actions are mainly out of the ideological consideration rather than

realistic national interests during that period. (Xia 2006: 173-174)

Specific to environmental protection, under Chairman Mao's leading, China has regarded nature as a constraint to be mastered or struggle against, rather than as something to be accommodated and preserved. (Alasdair 2007: 292) Environmental damages were almost ignored during 1950s-1970s. The Great Leap Forward, which aimed at overtaking Britain and catching up with the US in three to five years by blindly pursuing a rapid even impossible advancement in industrialization and agricultural production, provides a classic example. Besides, China adopted policies to give priority to the development of heavy industries, which are usually resource-intensive and highly polluted. Until 1972, China had not formulated and implemented any systematic policy concerning environmental protection. (Zhang & Zhao 2007: 63) China's presence in the UN Conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972 provides an example to support the identity explanation. At that time, there was not yet such idea of environmental protection in China's domestic political and economic spheres and it is the political struggle that was the main purpose of China's attendance in the conference. Chinese delegates voiced their opinion that communist countries did not face any environmental problem and environmental problems were created by imperialist countries to repress the development of third world countries. China also blamed for the resource exploitation of imperialist countries. (Ross quoted in Schroeder 2008: 511) It is the first time China communicates with others on environmental issues. Obviously, conflict is greater than consensus. As Wendt points out that conflict is in a higher potential than congruence since there is little shared knowledge when actors encounter at the first time.

During the 1980s, the second generation of leadership led by Deng Xiaoping argues that "peace and development" have become the two major themes of the times when reassessing the international situation. China has tried to keep a low profile on the ideology issue during the international communication since the reform and

opening-up policy in 1978. China identifies itself as a developing country. It should be said that this positioning appears more reasonable. It emphasizes on objective contents rooted in the national identities rather than mere feelings, likes and dislikes, and ideological differences when determining which category China belongs to. The establishment of the socialist market economy in the early 1990s opens a new era for China's involvement in the global mainstream economic system because this identity helps narrow down the gap between China and the rest of the world and ease the mutual exclusion and hostility. (Xia 2006: 175-176)

From the beginning of China's participation in the international environmental protection to the present, the identity as a developing country has continued to remain. At the UN Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, China came up with some ideas on behalf of developing countries, which stressed to protect human's right on survival and development. These ideas were ultimately accepted by the Declaration of this conference, (Zhang 1998: 12-13) in which Article Five says:

"People are the most precious. It is the people that propel social progress, create social wealth, develop science and technology and, through their hard work, continuously transform the human environment. Along with social progress and the advance of production, science and technology, the capability of man to improve the environment increases with each passing day."

(United Nations Environment Programme 1972: Article Five)

According to the report of the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China in November, 2012, China is still in the primary stage of socialism and will remain so for a long time. China's international position as the largest developing country in the world has not changed. "Development is still the key to solving all our problems." (China Daily 2012) China's principles and position on international cooperation in the environment field set forth by the national report on sustainable

development in 2002 are exactly based on the identity of a developing country. For example, it says:

“environmental protection should be adapted to the level of economic development [...] countries should have the right to choose the path of economic development and environmental protection according to their own national conditions [...] protecting the global environment is the common task in front of all mankind while developed countries should be more responsible [...] developing countries are faced with problems such as the shortage of water resources, air pollution, soil erosion, desertification, natural disasters, ecological destruction and etc. and the international community should understand and support the reasonable requirements of developing countries on these issues.”

(Chinese government 2002)

The contradiction between environmental protection and economic growth has put Chinese government in a dilemma. On the one hand, increasingly environmental degradation requires more vigorous and effective actions; on the other hand, the present national condition of being at the primary stage of development determines China cannot devote itself all to the environmental protection. Therefore, it is easy to understand the embarrassing situation that China now has, on paper, the most enlightened set of laws on protecting the environment of any developing nation while their enforcement turns out to be inefficient. (Alasdair 2007: 292) It also partly explains why China claims that it is not ready to accept quantified emission reduction quotas at present in the negotiation of climate change. Another point should be noted is that China obviously has already realized the benefits brought by the identity of a developing country, such as enjoying more economic assistance and technology transfer from the international community.

4.2.2 China's Role Identity

Compared with type identities, "role identities are not based on intrinsic properties and as such exist only in relation to others." Role identities cannot be enacted by a single actor. "One can have these identities only by occupying a position in a social structure and following behavioral norms toward others possessing relevant counter-identities." (Wendt 2005:227) What really defines roles is the degree of interdependence between self and other. Role identities are primarily formed in social interaction, and therefore changes are more likely to occur in the interaction. In other words, benign interactions among actors may make an originally antagonistic relationship transform into a benign one, promoting the cooperation of concerned parties. Specific to China, generally, China's recognition towards the international community has witnessed a process from being negative to relatively positive. China has gradually turned into a country, which tries to participate in and play a big role in the existing international system from a challenger and revolutionary outside the system. Environmental issues provide an approach to this transition.

Environmental issues have spillover effects and may generate a regional even global impact. As a result, addressing environmental problems effectively requires international cooperation and states are deeply dependent on each other. The global ecological crisis gives individuals shared responsibilities and connects everyone than ever before. At the era when environmental protection has become a universal value; any state that believes in, safeguards and practices the value is bound to get respected and accepted. China is no exception. Since 1979 China has signed a series of international environmental conventions, treaties and agreements, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, Basel Convention on Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, Montreal Protocol on

Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer (revised version), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (ratified it in November, 1992, being the fifth state who ratified this convention), Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on Combating Desertification and so on. These actions have shown China's efforts to engage in the international environmental protection. In order to carry out these international commitments, China also made tremendous efforts at home. (XinhuaNet 1996)

As a "world factory", China's economy highly relies on the world. China benefits a lot from the existing world system and it definitely would not give up these interests. Objectively, the fact that higher environmental-friendly criteria of products in export destinations have been implemented forces China to consider the environment more carefully and update itself to keep the profits.

Environmental issues could also be taken as an effective rallying point in China's integration into the world. To be sure, the progress is rarely smooth for such a country which is so different in terms of politics, economics and culture. China's involvement in the international system was temporarily disrupted in 1989 when the Tiananmen Incident occurred on June 4th. The incident, which resulted in widespread condemnation and economic sanctions from the West, pushed Beijing into diplomatic isolation. At that time, the environment became one of few diplomatic channels still open to the outside world. China needed to cooperate with the international system on environmental issues so as to "break the ice" of isolation. (Zang 2009: 551)

Climate change negotiations also provide good opportunities and platform for China to integrate into the world and even be a responsible great power because the international climate regime is relatively new and the trend of climate change governance has been uncertain. Especially after the global financial crisis, the international community expects more on China. Being a responsible great power in climate regime is not only an expectation from others, but also demands for

self-identification. The combination of these two factors determines China may adopt a more open and active attitude when dealing with climate change.

4.3 Identities Form: Social Learning

Identity is mainly formed in an interactionist context. Learning has construction effects on identities and interests. Along with the updating of knowledge, the process of social learning and the spread of certain ideas, some changes in the views of decision makers may occur. Specific to environmental issues, the following three aspects can demonstrate the effects of social learning on China's decision-making with respect to environmental protection.

First, strengthening cognition of environmental science helps to achieve the shift of China's environmental attitudes. This is the interaction with academic circle. Both international and domestic academic researches contribute to the shift. Internationally, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) established by UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 plays a big role. It is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change, which aims to provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of knowledge in climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic impacts. (IPCC 2013) Until now four Assessment Reports have been released in 1990, 1995, 2001, and 2007 respectively. The Fifth Assessment Report is expected to be completed in 2014 and will provide an update of knowledge on the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of climate change. These assessments have become the most authoritative documents for governments to understand climate change and its potential effects although they have been suffered some criticism such as unable to get rid of the political interference, the violation to defined procedures, its own mistakes and so on. They work as one of the most important scientific guidance for states to make relevant policies and take concrete measures at intra-state and inter-state spheres. The IPCC Impact Assessment released by Working Group II in 1990 estimates the possible negative outcomes of climate change for the world

including China covering a wide range from agriculture and forestry, natural terrestrial ecosystems, hydrology and water resources, to human settlement, the energy, transport and industrial sectors, human health, air quality to changes in Ultraviolet-B radiation, oceans and coastal zones. (IPCC 1990) To some extent, it provides China a more concrete scenario on climate change for the first time. After the release of the Fourth Assessment Report in 2007, Chinese government has announced China's National Climate Change Programme in the same year, in which outlines impacts and challenges of climate change on China, China's objectives, basic principles, key areas of actions, as well as policies and measures to address climate change for the period up to 2010. (China.org.cn 2007) The involvement of Chinese scientists, particularly social scientists, in the release of the first and second reports is very limited, with only a handful of people in their own names, not to mention exerting any significant influence. The fact that studies of developing countries, including China, concerning mitigating climate change and assessing the impact is relatively lagging behind those of developed countries resulted in a lack of powerful technical supports for negotiators. Therefore, developing countries tend to take a passive and defensive negotiating strategy. Chinese government realized this point and attached great importance to the role of IPCC assessment report. Chinese scholars participated in preparations of the Fourth Assessment Report in a comprehensive and thorough manner. Although the gap of capacities in scientific research with developed countries still remains, China's negotiating position and research ability seem to be greatly increased recently, which can better back up China's bargaining at international level. (Zhuang et al 2009: 266)

At the domestic level, numbers of academic organizations focusing on environment have been established. For example, as a high level non-for-profit international advisory body composed of Chinese and international well-known figures and experts in the field of environment and development, China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED) is established in 1992. Its stated main tasks are:

“exchanging and disseminating international successful experience in the field of environment and development; studying key environment and development issues of China; providing forward-looking, strategic and early warning policy recommendations to State leaders and decision makers of all levels in China, facilitating the implementation of sustainable development strategy and the development of resource-saving and environment-friendly society in China”.

(China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development 2013)

China's top think tank - Development Research Center of the State Council established a specific research institute to work on policies of resources and environment. In addition, other institutions such as Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences, Research Center for Eco-Environmental Science of Chinese Academy of Science, and Chinese Society for Environmental Science also assist to promote the understanding of environment issues. The update of scientific information can be detected as a main driving force for China's changing position on environmental issues.

Second, the environmental awareness is strengthened in the interaction with the nature. Increasingly environmental disasters force Chinese government to transform the attitudes. As mentioned before, the year of 1972 can be regarded as the first year China involved in the environmental protection, and that was also a year some serious pollution incidents occurred within China, such as the pollution of Dalian Bay, fishing contamination in Beijing and the water pollution in Songhua River. (Zhou & Ji 2009: 32) Objectively, these disasters correspond to the UN Conference on Human Environment and facilitate Chinese leaders to pay more attention on environmental issues. The devastating flood of Yangzi River in 1998, which caused terrible casualties and economic losses, is partly because of the long-term over-exploiting of forests and other ecological destruction along the river. During the last three decades, with

the rapid economic growth, China's environmental disasters have witnessed an uptrend. The severe soil erosion, worsening water pollution, garbage pollution across the country, air pollution, frequent floods and droughts, biodiversity losses, toxic waste pollution and so on have troubled the biggest developing country and the fastest growing economy in the world. In the meantime, environmental incidents happened frequently such as the Xiamen PX event, the poison cowpea event, and the riots because of the garbage incineration in Panyu City in Guangdong Province, the disaster of mud-rock flow in Zhouqu County in Gansu Province, Beijing PM2.5, and the groundwater contamination in Shandong Province and so on. Environmental education and communication also help increase the environmental awareness of the public.

Third, the spread of international norms on environmental protection contributes to China's position on environmental issues, especially on climate change. This happens in the international interaction. In the evolution process of the international climate regime, a series of fundamental principles and international consensus have been shaped through conventions, declarations, treaties and other forms. For example, China emphasizes the first principle of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):

"The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Accordingly, the developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof."

(United Nations General Assembly 1992)

Another principle is highlighted by China is that "climate change and its adverse effects should be addressed while meeting the requirements of sustainable development" in the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and

Sustainable Development in 2002. (The Eighth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2002) China thinks these two principles mentioned accord with its identity of a developing country and corresponding interests although they may be understood in another perspective by certain countries. As a result, they have been used as important basis to support China's position and often cited in the negotiation and decision making.

4.4 Case Study: China's Standpoints and Actions in the Negotiation of Climate Change

4.4.1 China's Role in Mitigating Climate Change

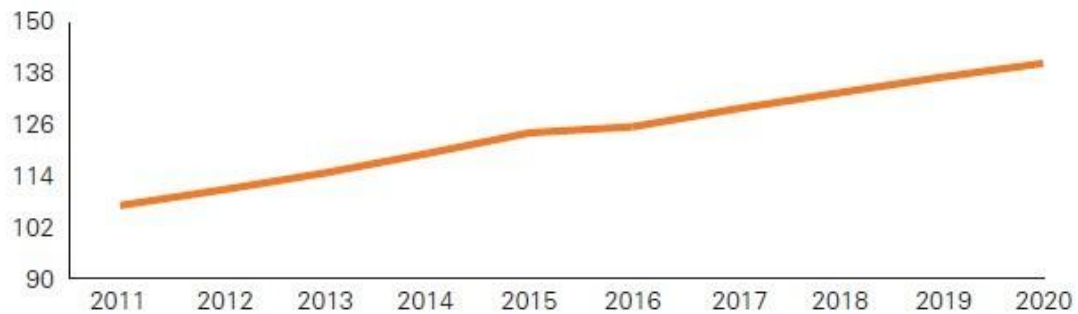
China plays a significant role in dealing with global climate change. It can be detected from three aspects. First of all, China's emissions and the high potential to increase determine its influence in climate politics. As mentioned before, China overtook the U.S. as the world's largest emitter in 2007. China's huge population, relatively low level of economic development, coal-dominated energy structure, ongoing process of urbanization, increasing per capita energy consumption and other basic national conditions implies a growing trend of energy demands and greenhouse gas emissions in the coming decades. It will be difficult to achieve the ambitious goal without China's active participation in mitigating climate change. (Zhang 2010: 69)

Figure 1: Forecast of China's Total Energy Consumption (2010-2020)

FORECAST OF CHINA'S TOTAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION, 2011-20*

China is expected to use 40 percent more energy in 2020 than in 2011.

(QUADRILLION BTU)



Note: Btu = British Thermal Unit

*Estimate based on baseline world economic growth used by the US Energy Information Administration

US ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

(China Business Review 2012: 37)

Figure 2: Total Consumption of Energy and Its Composition of China (2001-2011)

Total Consumption of Energy and Its Composition

Year	Total Energy Consumption (10 000 tons of SCE)	As Percentage of Total Energy Consumption (%)			
		Coal	Crude Oil	Natural Gas	Hydro-power, Nuclear Power, Wind Power
2001	150406	68.3	21.8	2.4	7.5
2002	159431	68.0	22.3	2.4	7.3
2003	183792	69.8	21.2	2.5	6.5
2004	213456	69.5	21.3	2.5	6.7
2005	235997	70.8	19.8	2.6	6.8
2006	258676	71.1	19.3	2.9	6.7
2007	280508	71.1	18.8	3.3	6.8
2008	291448	70.3	18.3	3.7	7.7
2009	306647	70.4	17.9	3.9	7.8
2010	324939	68.0	19.0	4.4	8.6
2011	348002	68.4	18.6	5.0	8.0

(National Bureau of Statistics of China 2012)

Second, China has a demonstration effect on developing countries. As the biggest developing country, China plays an important role in the group of 77, one of the three main political groups in climate negotiations. (Zhang 2010: 69) China's response to climate change is of great significance in shaping the position of other developing countries by directly affecting major developing countries and demonstrating a model on non-principal ones.

Finally, China may eventually affect actions of major developed countries. The United States and some developed countries once argued that it made no sense without the participation of major developing countries to reduce emissions. Once China and other developing countries start to take substantial actions, this excuse is untenable. In fact, China's big role in mitigating climate change gives China more chances to realize its own interests in the international bargaining. (Zhang 2010: 69)

4.4.2 China's Standpoint: Continuity and Changes

It is worthy to explore continuity and changes of China's position on climate change since 1992, when China ratified the UNCCCC. Over the past 20 years, there are some changes in China's stance while an overall stability remains. The binding obligation of emission reduction is the core of climate change negotiations. China insists to reject a cap on carbon emissions, which constitutes the key point of China's position and also the biggest concern of the international community. Chinese expressions may vary from case to case; however, there is no sign of budging on this point so far. (Chen 2007) For example, a few months before COP15, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao made it clear when he was interviewed in London. He said, "It's difficult for China to take quantified emission reduction quotas at the Copenhagen conference, because this country is still at an early stage of development." (Zang 2010: 546)

What has been changed is that China participates in international climate change negotiations with a more flexible, more cooperative attitude than before, which is embodied in four concrete aspects: first, China's attitude towards Clean

Development Mechanism (CDM) is shifted from being skeptical to an active support. Previously, China was afraid of that developed countries might transfer the emission reduction obligations to developing countries through CDM. However, at COP7 in 2001, Mr. Liu Jiang, head of the Chinese Delegation stated that China supported CDM. (Chen 2007: 56) Second, in terms of funds and technology, China has witnessed a change from persisting that rich countries should provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries, to calling for a win-win mechanism to promote a mutually beneficial technical cooperation. Third, the situation that mainly focus on the UNCCC and the Kyoto protocol in the past is budged to hold an open attitude towards other forms of international climate cooperation mechanism. Fourth, China has promised to report domestic measures and implementation of emission reduction to the UN every 2 years under the condition of no damage to its national sovereignty. China has also agreed with the long-term goal of controlling the temperature rise within 2°C at Copenhagen Conference. (Zhuang et al 2010: 193-195)

4.4.3 China's Negotiators

As mentioned in the theory part, different from Putnam's assumption that regard negotiators just as an honest representative on behalf of domestic main interest groups, this paper looks upon negotiators as an entity possessing individual political preferences and interests and participating directly in the game at the national level. In addition, the government as a whole has some interests and different departments within the political system strive for their own interests as well. Specific to China's climate change negotiations, China's policymakers tend to assume that a binding commitment to quantified emissions of greenhouse gas would bring negative consequences to the national macro economy. (Zhuang et al 2009: 281) For Chinese government as a whole, China benefits a lot from its active involvement in international climate negotiations as a developing country. On the one hand, it gives China an access to the benefits of "free riding": China can enjoy the gains of emission

reduction achieved by developed countries without efforts; on the other hand, China can take advantage of CDM and other mechanism to establish its own clean, efficient and sustainable energy system as soon as possible by acquiring technology transfer and financial assistance from developed countries. (Zhuang et al 2009: 279-280) Obviously, China's stance is consistent with the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" and China's current development level of social economy. As a result, China has larger win-sets at domestic level to support its stance on climate change.

In China, the State Small Leadership Group on Climate Change, Energy Conservation and Emission Reduction (Climate Group III) is formed in 2007 and composed of mostly ministers from more than a dozen of government departments. It is the supreme policy deliberation and decision-making body now chaired by China's new Prime Minister Li Keqiang. (Zang 2009: 563). Actually, China's negotiation delegation on climate change is led by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its members mainly come from member units of Climate Group III and a few scholars from certain academic institutions are also absorbed. The participation of NGOs, local governments, enterprises and other social groups is relatively limited. Although Chinese leaders attach great importance to the issue of climate change, it has not yet become one of the top priorities in the government's agenda. Because of China's top-down model of decision making and emphasizing the consistency of interests among various departments, fundamental divergence rarely appears in domestic decision-making. (Zhuang et al 2009: 272)

However, it should be noted that there does exist some inconsistency in different departments of the government, which may diminish the domestic win-sets and increase the bargaining capacity at international level. Climate policymaking is closely related with national departments such as China's National Development and Reform Commission, National Energy Administration, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environmental

Protection, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and so on. Due to the different focus and interests of those departments involved as well as diverse correlation with climate change, the influence on the country's decision-making in this respect varies a lot. In general, Ministry of Environmental Protection pays more attention to the environmental impact with a relatively radical attitude while the National Development and Reform Commission focuses more on the industry development and competitiveness and holds a relatively conservative attitude towards climate change. (Chen 2007: 55)

4.4.4 China's Domestic Context

At domestic level, different interest groups always pressure the government to take policies in their favor and politicians pursue their own power by establishing alliance with these groups. The actors at this level may represent bureaucratic agencies, interest groups, social classes, or even "public opinion". (Putnam 1988: 436) Two sets of factors at domestic level can partly determine the size of win-sets. The first set refers to the preferences and coalition including the distribution of power, preferences, and possible coalitions among domestic constituents; and the second is the political institution. They can be applied to explore the domestic context of China's claims on climate change.

China's engagement in coping with climate change has different effects on diversified groups. For some traditional industries with heavy pollution and high energy consumption, the cost of achieving the agreement tends to be higher than vetoing because they may be probably constrained by a higher production standards, the requirement of improving the existing technique and more cost of production, which lead to the decrease of profits. Thus, it is a reasonable choice for them to object or even obstruct the ratification of the agreement as far as possible. On the contrary, for those emerging low carbon industries of high-tech content, high additional value and low energy consumption, such as renewable energy industries, the ratification of relevant treaties implies more opportunities for their development

so that supports from them are in a higher potential. These interest-led groups may establish alliance with different bureaucratic agencies with the aim of trying to make sure their voice can be heard. The game between those alliances provides an explanation why China's prudent commitment in climate change and some rules or regulations on emission reduction were partially or incompletely carried out in practice.

However, it seems that the attitude of China's constituents towards coping with climate change is homogeneous. Along with increasingly public awareness of environmental protection, the interests of diversified groups are relatively consistent in the long run while the difference just reflects in varying degrees and current attitudes. It is important to take this point into consideration for those politicians who pursue the long-term legitimacy and power otherwise they will risk being thrown out of office.

Political institutions also constrain the size of win-sets. The political system and ratification procedures clearly have an impact on the win-sets. In terms of the political system, China adopts the National People's Congress (NPC) system, through which the people are thought to determine by themselves the future and fate of the nation. The Communist Party of China, as the only ruling party, claims that the Party represents fundamental benefits of most people. China's government is granted high autonomy from the voters. In this light, on the one hand, authoritative negotiators on behalf of interests of most domestic people make China possess a strong domestic backup in international negotiations; on the other hand, the fact that goals must be achieved pressures negotiators. Both sides actually expand the "win-sets" and weaken China's bargaining capacity in international negotiations.

How about China's ratification procedures? According to the Procedural Law of the People's Republic of China on Conclusion of Treaties in 1990, treaties are divided into three types: (a) treaties and important agreements, including treaties and agreements of a political nature, treaties and agreements concerning territory and

delimitation of boundary lines, treaties and agreements relating to judicial assistance and extradition, treaties and agreements which contain stipulations inconsistent with the laws of the People's Republic of China, treaties and agreements which are subject to ratification as agreed by the contracting parties and others subject to ratification.

“A treaty or an important agreement after being signed, shall be submitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or by the department concerned under the State Council in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the State Council for examination. It shall then be submitted by the State Council to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for decision on ratification. The President of the People's Republic of China shall ratify it pursuant to the decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.”

(The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress 1990: Article 7)

(b) treaties and agreements which need to be submitted to the State Council for examination and decision. (c) agreements for which on ratification by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress or approval by the State Council are not required. (The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress 1990)

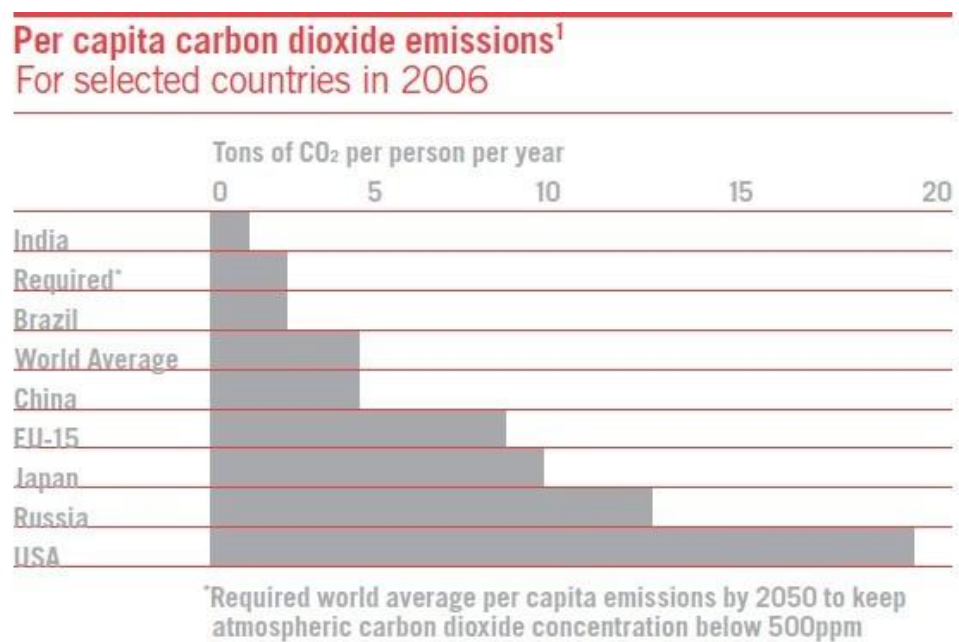
Many international treaties and agreements regard to climate change belong to the first two types. For instance, the UNFCCC is classified into “treaties and important agreements”, which need to be ratified by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. So is the Kyoto Protocol. However, it seems that ratification procedures exist in a more symbolic than a real way because the president, almost all members of the State Council and the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress are from the Communist Party of China. According to the Procedural Law of the People's Republic of China on Conclusion of Treaties, all the draft treaty or agreement of the Chinese side should be submitted to the State

Council for examination and decision before issuing. In case that the Chinese draft has to undergo major modifications as a result of negotiation, the revised version shall be re-submitted to the State Council for examination and decision. (The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress 1990: Article 5) In some cases, it is the same institution- the State Council, to determine China's position before signing the treaty and then ratify it after the signing. Even in cases which require the approval of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, it is not common that an already signed treaty fails at the ratification stage. Additionally, the president shall act following the decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress without veto power. As a result, on the one hand, the fact that China's relatively simple and centralized procedure with respect to the ratification of international treaties lead to large win-sets, will weaken bargaining abilities of Chinese negotiators at international level and reduce the possibility of China's involvement in the international cooperation; on the other hand, it means as long as China signs the treaty, there is little worry about the follow-up ratification at domestic level.

4.4.5 China's Strategies

Strategies negotiators use in the bargaining at home and abroad also impact the size of "win-sets". At international level, negotiators struggle for maximizing national interests while minimizing adverse consequences. Specific to China's negotiation on climate change, two strategies are often used for not making legally binding commitments: one is emphasizing the per capita emissions of greenhouse gases. Over the years, China repeats that the equity principle of the UNFCCC should be judged by per capita emissions, especially historical per capita emissions. However, currently, China's annual emissions per head have approximated to the world average (Figure 3), and historical emissions could reach its global per capita share by the early 2020s. (Hallding 2009) This means this convenient excuse is not as powerful as before in the near future and China's negotiation space is getting smaller.

Figure 3: Per Capita Carbon Dioxide Emissions for Selected Countries in 2006



(The Climate Group 2008: 5)

The other is that China identifies itself as a developing country with an urgent task to fight against poverty and allies with other developing countries. China is one of the strongest supporters for the principle of “common but differentiated responsibility”. In Chinese view, developed countries should bear a larger obligation for mitigating climate change and other environmental challenges because historically, they have contributed more to environmental degradation and possess greater adaptive capacity in terms of funds, technology and governance experience. (Stalley 2013: 3)

China always cooperates with G77 to strengthen the negotiating power of developing countries. However, several challenges to the strategy have emerged. The position as a developing country has been questioned because China’s GDP per capita in 2011 has reached to 5,445 (US\$), a level of upper middle income countries. (World Bank 2013b) Some divisions among the group of “G77 and China” have been presented as well. For example, the Alliance of Small Island States requires major developing countries to take appropriate mitigating actions as soon as possible because they are faced more severe threaten by the sea level rise and increasingly

frequent storms. Additionally, internal parties of the group have different focuses. For instance, China and Brazil attach importance to the technology transfer; the least developed countries and African countries concerns more about financing assistance; OPEC members worry the reduction of demands for oil in the process of slowing down. (Zhang 2010: 69-70)

Additionally, in order to ease the international disappointment, Chinese government set a binding target to cut CO₂ emissions per unit of GDP by 17 percent in the 12th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development. (National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China 2012b)

Those usually used strategies help to maximize China's interests in negotiations. This paper believes they are more than consideration of negotiation tactics, but also the real condition China faces. Nevertheless, the fact that some challenges to those strategies have emerged requires China to reconsider its approach to climate change.

Domestic strategies should be explored carefully as well. Two strategies will be discussed here. One is that Chinese government provides some compensation for the domestic constituencies to expand their own win-sets. For instance, according to Enterprise Income Tax Law of the People's Republic of China, which come into force on 1 January 2008, "Enterprises' income from engaging in qualified projects of environmental protection and energy and water conservation may be subject to exempted or reduced enterprise income tax." (National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China 2007: Article 34) Some other financial supports have also been applied. To some extent, incentives like this can stimulate corporations to join in actions of coping with climate change.

The other strategy is connecting climate change with the national security and people's daily life to attract the public's attention and improve the participation rate. The concern upon the vulnerability in national security intensifies with China's

increasing dependence on imported oil and other resources. Climate change is conceptualized as an energy policy issue since 2003. (Zang 2010: 562) It has become a hot topic in a variety of media and academic discussions. Visualized impacts of climate change and its possible further effects have also been stressed by the government. For example, the continued sea level rise will gradually flood the economically developed coastal regions of China including the Yangtze River delta, the Pearl River delta and the Binhai New Area in Tianjin. It will seriously threaten China's social stability and further economic development. (Zhang 2010: 75) Climate change increases the frequency and intensity of extreme weather and climate events. In 2011, the country has been hit by a string of extreme weather and climate events, including the low-temperature freezing rain and snow in south China, spring and summer droughts in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, rainstorms and floods in the south, typhoons in coastal areas, autumn rains in western China and serious waterlogging in Beijing. These weather and climate disasters have impacted China's economic and social development as well as people's lives and property in a large degree. In 2011 alone, natural disasters affected 430 million people and caused direct economic losses of 309.6 billion yuan (about 50 billion US\$). (National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China 2012b: 2)

It is reasonable to say China's domestic strategies are effective to enlarge the win-sets based on the exploration above. China's government has played a guiding role in the process. Again, a higher potential exists for the ratification of relevant treaties and agreements thanks to those strategies. And again, I do not think they are only for a strategy purpose, but also present real concerns of China. After all, the adverse effects of climate change do exist.

4.5 An Analysis Based on Interests

Four factors are detected when exploring China's involvement in international environmental issues, namely China's environmental degradation and ecological

vulnerability, political concerns, economic costs and the national image. Some of them appear as barriers while others play promotion roles. The priorities of these factors may be different under given situations.

According to Detlef Sprinz and Tapani Vaahtoranta, environmental policy is a reaction to environmental problems in most cases. They also point out that the more adverse environmental effects on their own citizens and ecosystems (“ecological vulnerability”), the more countries being inclined to take vigorous actions to minimize the effects. (Sprinz & Vaahtoranta 1994: 78-79) It makes sense most of the time. For instance, China has been cooperated with Mongolia, Japan and South Korea to control sandstorms for a couple of years because the adverse effect is somewhat beyond China’s expectations. However, it is not always the case. China’s emphasis on the adaption to climate change provides an example. China thinks itself more susceptible to adverse effects of climate change because it lacks of adaption capacities for ecological vulnerability as a developing country. China’s intensifying cognition of climate change has not necessarily promoted its commitment to emission reduction; instead, Chinese government shows more interests in the cooperation with respect to the adaptation to climate change. China called for more attention on adaptation in the future negotiations at COP11 in 2005. The reason lies in that it is hard to measure the costs and potential benefits of mitigating climate change for a country because climate change is a global and long-term issue. The cost is usually contemporary while the benefit is in the unforeseeable future. China, a developing country, focuses more on contemporary costs and gains. (Chen 2007: 57-58)

Obviously, compared with emission reduction, strengthening adaptation capabilities is more effective and can avoid future risks of long-term investments. China’s participation in international environmental protection is not all-around but selected. China prefers over outcomes than strategies and enhancing adaptation capabilities is regarded as a kind of subjective interests, which are possible to attain.

Legitimacy is the main political concern when Chinese government dealing with environmental problems. China's ruling party claims that it always represents fundamental interests of most people. Environmental degradation is closely related to public interests. Public's anxieties to environmental problems have increased and they require "a more beautiful environment". Environmental degradation has become a source of grievance. Collective action is prone to happen when the grievances become too burdensome for individuals to tolerate. (Jiang & Ortolano 2009: 143-144) According to Yang Chaofei, vice President of Chinese Society for Environmental Science, since 1996, the number of mass incidents with respect to environment in China has maintained to grow at an annual average of 29%. (Feng & Wang 2012) It poses a big threaten to the social stability, which is always the top priority in the agenda of Chinese government. Participation in international environmental protection can be seen as an extension of domestic environmental policies. The lack of capacities of dealing with environmental issues alone is also responsible for China's intention to cooperate with others, especially in terms of funds, technology and governance. Thus, an active attitude can be found in China's international environmental actions in some cases. However, China's concern that involving in the international environmental governance may interfere in its autonomy provides an explanation why China always maintains that the strengthening of international cooperation should be based on respecting national sovereignty.

Economic costs include three aspects: the first aspect is the possible economic loss of environmental degradation; the second one is potential benefits when China put some international mechanism such as CDM into practice; and the third is the costs of adopting environmental policies. The first two factors drive China to play a vigorous role in international environmental protection while the third one makes China hesitate. As a developing country with millions of poor people, China faces challenges in balancing economic development and environmental quality. "Economic growth, rather than environmental protection or sustainability, is still

China's priority in practice. " (Liu & Diamond 2005: 1184) Statistics from a report issued by the World Bank and China's State Environmental Protection Administration- the predecessor of Ministry of Environmental Protection, show that the total cost of air and water pollution in China in 2003 was about 2.68 percent of GDP for the same year. (World Bank and State Environmental Protection Administration of China 2007: xvii) China has changed its opinion on the mechanism of CDM because it is conscience of potential benefits of attaining more advanced energy technologies and funds from developed countries. In terms of the third aspect, some researches predict that by 2020, the cost of emission reduction would reach to fifty billion million yuan (approximately 7.6 billion US\$) every year even a reduction target of 10% was set in China. (Ma 2011: 177) Besides, to a large extent, export trade should be responsible for China's increasing pollution, because most of China's exports are primary goods or manufactured products that create heavy pollution and require intensive resource uses. (Liu & Diamond 2005: 1184) However, in the meantime, export trade is one of three major driving forces for economic growth. The contradiction of environmental protection and economic growth has emerged once again. All of these position China in a dilemma when balancing economic and environment challenges.

National image is another consideration for China. A positive image assists to realize foreign-policy goals of a country. As a rising power, pursuing a positive national image occupies an important position in China's diplomatic agenda. China is sensitive to criticism and values the praise. In an era when environmental protection has become a universal value, a nation who complies with the principle will get respected and accepted. As a result, an active participation in international environmental protection contributes to counter emerged arguments of "China's environment threat" and "China's energy threat" and help to establish a new image of a responsible great power.

5. Conclusion

Environmental problems cannot be addressed by a single country because of its spillover attribution. China is no exception. A generally changing trend from denial to internalization with respect to China's attitudes towards environmental protection can be traced. China's current involvement in international environmental issues seems to be somewhere between the passive and the active, moving towards the latter. The identity theory provides an explanation for this historical change. Identities of a socialist country and a developing country determine China could not be fully involved in the global environmental protection while its desire to be identified as a responsible great power requires it to do so. These identities are formed and strengthened in an interactive context through a deepening understanding of environment science, direct or indirect perception of the environment around and the spread of norms on environmental protection.

China's standpoints and actions in climate change are resulted from both domestic and international pressure. The logic of two-level games provides an explanation of how China's decision-makers strive to reconcile domestic and international imperatives simultaneously in the negotiation of mitigating climate change. To a large extent, China's relatively centralized model of decision-making and symbolic ratification procedures smooth the process of the ratification of international environmental treaties and agreements at domestic level. It is true that the divergence of interests among different groups exists, but it seems that interest groups just have restricted influence on China's climate position due to their limited participation. Strategies China often uses also contribute to enlarge "win-sets", such as emphasizing on historical per capita emissions, which has been challenged by its rapid growth; insisting on its identity as a developing country and uniting with other developing countries; defining climate change in the perspective of national security; compensating for domestic constituencies and etc. On the one hand, the expansion of "win-sets" helps to reconcile domestic and international interests; on the other

hand, it has weakened China's negotiating capacity in international bargaining.

Four factors have been discussed when explaining China's engagement in international environmental issues, namely China's environmental degradation and ecological vulnerability, political concerns, economic costs and the national image. They work together on China's international environmental policy. Some of them appear as barriers while others play promotion roles. The complexity of this explanation also lies in that barriers from one perspective may become driving forces by viewing them in another way. In terms of priorities, I believe that Chinese government will continue to keep domestic social stability and secure autonomy in international interactions ahead of any issue. (Chan et al 2008:307) Compared with environmental protection, economic growth is still the priority. (Stalley 2013: 2) If participation in global environmental protection has positive effects on economic development, or at least poses no threat, Chinese government is prone to position itself as an environmentalist. On the contrary, when actions of environmental protection may limit China's economic growth, enthusiasm for protection will be severely restricted. As a developing country, China tends to pursue interests that can be realized in a short time such as China's preference on cooperation concerning adaption abilities.

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