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Understanding China as a Responsible Power in International Society

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ABSTRACT

Recent scholarship of China’s international relations has concentrated on the idea of “state responsibility” and how China acts in line with this notion. Rationalists understand China’s “responsible power” pursuit as either political rhetoric or material cost-benefit calculations. This study analyses China as a responsible power through a social constructivist approach. Establishing the theoretical framework upon existing norm diffusion and state socialisation literature, this project examines the processes of how the international community has socialised China into the concept of “state responsibility” and how China has responded to this normative engagement in a dynamic international social environment.

Comparing evolving international criteria of “responsible power” with China’s interpretation, the content analysis suggests that China’s definition of state responsibility is a combination of the acknowledgement of rules of sovereignty and non-intervention, and the willingness to participate in international regimes. However it has not fully embraced the notion of individual security and freedom which is now a standard for “responsible power” in international society. The thesis uses two case studies to explore the findings of the content analysis. Focusing on China’s foreign behaviour in the UN Security Council, the first case discusses how the international community has sought to socialise China into the norms of human rights during “Arab Spring.” It finds that the social pressure from an enlarging normative group has motivated China to “silently” approve the Libyan intervention; while the lack of social rewards has generated China’s non-cooperative behaviour in Syria. The second case maps a social network of the international environmental community, emphasising China’s improving social status. It argues that by effectively employing social rewards, the normative group has successfully engaged China to fulfil its responsibility in biological diversity. However, the diverse interests and relatively small-sized normative group have weakened the socialisation effect on China in mitigating climate change. The case-studies suggest China’s interpretation of responsibility is greatly shaped by the external normative factors; but China also provides its own insights and interpretations associated with the idea of “responsible power” during socialisation processes. Therefore, China should be regarded as both “norm-taker” and “norm-maker” in the social construction of “responsible power.”
For the memory of my late grandfather,
Gao Chaofu 高朝甫 (1916-1996)
who inspired me with his cheerful disposition, artistic eyes, curious mind and learning heart
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INTRODUCTION

The premise driving this study is that states define and fulfil their international responsibility in a dynamic normative environment. Recent scholarship of China’s international relations has concentrated on the idea of “state responsibility” and how China acts in line with this notion in international society. This thesis explores how China conceptualises its responsibilities in contemporary international affairs. It looks to make explicit the factors that have contributed to China’s recognition of “state responsibility” and how China has been influenced by those factors and responded to them in its pursuit of a status as a “responsible power” in the international community.

As China has emerged as a globally influential power, growing numbers of states and non-state actors expect and urge China to undertake obligations commensurate with its power and capacity as a “responsible member” in the international society. Numerious scholars, especially those from China, have argued that being a “responsible power” is inherently a facet of Chinese national identity, and thus China has already established its image as a “responsible great power”; some other scholars however have pointed out China’s “irresponsible conduct” and maintained that China has not yet been accepted as a fully “qualified member” by the whole of international society. This debate has largely focused on whether China can be considered as a “responsible power” or a “status-quo state,” and almost unavoidably has led to dichotomous classifications which are underpinned by subjective and moral judgements.

The concept of “responsibility” is not entirely an exogenous or a modern construction for China. It has been rooted in Chinese traditions of statecraft and views of world order. Nevertheless, a historical and domestic-driven approach cannot fully elaborate China’s understanding of “responsible power” in the contemporary global context. Nor can a presumed national identity of “responsible power” explain some of China’s non-cooperative behaviour. Since the Reforming and Opening Up in 1978, China has

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increasingly integrated into the international system and gradually adapted to international rules and regimes across a range of issue areas. Instead of treating the idea of “responsible power” as inherent in China, an alternative approach is to investigate China’s “state responsibility” as a product of external normative and material forces and expectations. Rationalists believe that external material incentives can induce a state to make strategic choices based on cost-benefit calculation. From this perspective, most states choose to behave in certain ways by complying with the international regimes, because the positive external motivation outweighs negative sanction. Since a “responsible state” status can often constrain power by precluding various policies and policy instruments as well as can reduce the space for political manoeuvre on both the regional and global stage, rationalists note that China’s failure to ascribe to various normative standards of the international community, either through action or rhetorically, are because China does not receive sufficient material benefit for behaving “responsibly” in international arena.

Constructivists argue that world politics is socially constructed rather than strictly shaped by material incentives. In addition to the material motivation, constructivists argue that the “teaching” and “learning” processes of norms, values and ideas are important factors that influence international relations. “Epistemic communities” are influential in the development and diffusion of social knowledge. “Learning” provides actors with inter-subjectively defined norms and beliefs. This social knowledge can shape states’ preferences and interests through the interaction between states and the normative/epistemic society. Based on this assumption, China’s attempt to be a “responsible power” may not be a static and inherent preference or a strategic decision originating from traditional “realpolitik” considerations. Instead, it can be scrutinised in a normative international context where China internalises the international standards of state responsibility through socialisation processes of normative persuasion, social

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6 Ibid., p. 795.
influence, mimicking and identification. Previous studies on China’s socialisation in international society have exhibited a “teaching-learning” pattern between norm entrepreneurs and China, which from this perspective, is categorised as a “novice” in the normative group. Generally emphasising China’s adaptation of international norms, those studies, more or less, regard China as a passive “norm-taker” and do not explain the inconsistency between China’s foreign behaviour and the normative requirements.

International norms are not predetermined or unchangeable. Different norms can compete with each other, which leads to the evolution and degeneration of international norms. Panke and Petersohn suggest that a norm can be incrementally curbed in a relatively stable international environment especially when it is imprecise. There has not been any single specific international law or rule to comprehensively regulate or define what state responsibilities exactly are, but rather it is a changing constellation of customary and positive international law, values, norms and ideas about how a state is expected to behave in international society. As a rising power with its own political and cultural tradition, China would not be a mere recipient of “state responsibility” that is mostly defined by Western countries. Recent studies indicate that China has taken the lead in different forums of global governance and started to play the role as “norm-maker” or “norm-shaper.” Therefore, how China responds to external expectations and contributes to the evolution of “responsible power” is equally important as how the normative society has influenced China’s interpretation of this concept.

Borrowing the tools from sociology and social psychology, this study builds upon the existing constructivist scholarship of norm diffusion and state socialisation. As the central argument, this thesis contends that China has gradually internalised the international standards of state responsibility through its socialisation in international community. On one hand, under persuasion and social influence from the international community, China has internalised external conceptions of responsibility into its own definition of a

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“responsible power” by identifying itself with the “normative group” and mimicking the “pro-norm” behaviour of the group members. China’s definition of “responsible power” has demonstrated increasing uniformity with international criteria and this is reflected in China’s specific foreign behaviour. On the other hand, China has tried to exert its own normative influence on the development of the “responsible power” concept and shape it into its favourable way. China’s international socialisation has offered China opportunities to add some “Chinese characteristics” to the notion of “responsible power.”

**Methodology**

This study adopts a “state-above-society” model to examine China’s state socialisation, which means it mainly highlights Chinese government’s viewpoints and political elites’ decision making. When it mentions “China,” this thesis mainly addresses Chinese government. Treating China as ideationally unified entity, this study may not be capable of revealing any possible societal influence on China’s perception of responsibility, but it hopes to provide sufficient evidence to enable the research to generate valid inferences. Future research on domestic-international nexus of norm diffusion could pay more attention to the domestic salience of international norms through a detailed examination on China’s societal players, such as interest groups, mass media, and public opinion. Additionally, an in-depth analysis could be given to China’s political structure and how it affects China’s socialisation.\(^\text{10}\)

With this proviso in mind, this study uses both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. It uses Chinese domestic sources, such as official publications, political leaders’ statements, and policy documents to examine China’s interpretation of state responsibility. On the international level, this project employs press releases, media reports, negotiation and implementation records of international treaties, and conference briefs and reports of UN General Assembly and Security Council to discuss China’s interaction with the international community.

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\(^{10}\) Some scholars argue that repressive regimes are more likely to ratify international norms, for instance human rights treaties, because they receive less domestic constrains and can sign those treaties as merely a symbolic commitment. See Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, Kiyoteru Tsutsui and John W. Meyer, “International Human Rights Law and the Politics of Legitimation: Repressive States and Human Rights Treaties,” *International Sociology*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2008).
Content Analysis: Measuring China’s Responsibility

Content analysis is a quantitative investigation of messages which aims to identify significant “statistical relationships between message content and social movement.”

Content analysis has been used to measure a wide range of message characteristics, such as television content, gender roles portrayed in film characters, and structure of new websites. However, the use of content analysis to measure a specific identity, value or notion of any type has been rather limited. National identity was the research focus of a content analysis by David Laitin who calculated the frequency of the words related to identities in Russian-language newspapers in order to understand how identities had been shaped in the post-Soviet Union republics. What researchers of Chinese politics can achieve from conducting a content analysis was discussed in the 1960s and 1970s when some scholars proposed to utilise this research method in a study of Chinese media press’ reports during the Indo-Chinese border crisis in 1962. They emphasised the advantages of content analysis since it encouraged transparency and consistency. They also found that such an approach was valuable in developing a research design as it allowed the researchers to narrow down the information and sources so that the research was “manageable but still representative of developments in China.”

Regarding “responsible power” as either a political rhetoric or a national identity, both rationalists and revisionists tend to evaluate China’s pursuit of responsible power with qualitative methods. There are very few research efforts which have attempted to explore this topic in quantitative ways. Nevertheless, Neuendof and Skalski have suggested that identity, value and ideas seem “uniquely suited to measurement via content analysis of cultural products.” Cultural products, which can provide grist for the analysis at the national level, are varied, including official codifications, official news

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12 Ibid.


15 Ibid., p. 123.

releases, official web sites, official political communications, governmental annual reports, national leaders’ vision statements and other political documents. The efficacy of utilising cultural products using quantitative content analysis is demonstrated in different studies by Wang and Johnston. By calculating the average frequency of Chinese images in two main official series, *Beijing Review* and *Government Work Papers*, published in the past half century, Wang Hongying found that nine Chinese national images/identity had been portrayed by the Chinese government, and discovered four images were consistent across time. Instead of trying to display every facet of Chinese national identity, Johnston focuses on the identity of responsible power by examining the frequency of articles using the term “responsible major power” in the *People's Daily*, and Chinese academic articles on international relations and foreign policy between 1992 and 2004. He reveals that a large portion of those articles which use the term of “responsible major power” emphasise constructive participation in international institutions.

The Wang and Johnston studies suggest the usefulness of using content analysis for measuring national image and national identity. Building on their efforts, this thesis will undertake a content analysis in order to depict and assess the general trend of China’s official discourse of its international responsibility as a “responsible power” from 1978 to 2010. It utilises Rosemary Foot’s definition of responsible power in three phases as her theoretical model. It will examine one Chinese official news-magazine, *Beijing Review*, from 1978 to 2010 as the research target. Different with the previous research, this content analysis offers a larger coverage rate of the samples publication (33.3%) and utilises a more consistent search and selection of key words that are related to China as a “responsible power.” The frequency and changes of meaning of various notions of state responsibility across the study period will then be compared with Foot’s hypothesis concerning the evolution of international standards of state responsibility since the end of WWII.

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17 Ibid., pp.210-211.
Discourse Analysis: China in “Norm Entrapment”

Language is powerful, both descriptive and performative. People tend to use language to be recognised as performing in line with certain identities, values or beliefs. So does a state in the international community. Rationalist approaches to international relations sometimes neglect the significance of discourse because of the undeniable gap between rhetoric and reality in world politics. Even though it sometimes recognises “discourse power,” rationalist analysis considers discourse to be nothing more than an instrumental application of political rhetoric. For instance, China’s “peaceful rise” rhetoric is seen as a way to provide reassurance in response to external doubts about China’s evolution as a great power. Nevertheless, Habermas’ “communicative rationality” and constructivist concept of “rhetoric action” and “norm entrapment” have revealed that the value-referential discourse can enhance the legitimacy of state’s behaviours. These value laden discourses, while enhancing legitimacy, can be regulative and constraining due to the “requirement of consistency.” The expectation of consistency applies to the match “between argument and action,” as well as the match “between arguments used at different times and in different context,” and largely influences the actor’s reputation and credibility in the community. In the situation of “norm entrapment,” the state feels incapable of pursuing the preferred policy that violates norms articulated and affirmed by its prior rhetoric. In some scenarios, the norm entrepreneurs’ skilful framing and rhetorical manoeuvre leave the target state little space to craft a “socially sustainable rebuttal” of the norm. This “rhetorical coercion” drives states to behave in a “pro-norm” way even when it may have not internalised the

25 Ibid., p. 65.
promoted norm. Based on this theory, China’s official discourse about its international responsibility and the self-identification of a “responsible power” has established certain “standards” or “criteria” under which China’s domestic and foreign policy would be judged by the other members of the international society. Therefore, a rhetoric or discourse analysis of China’s “rhetorical commitment” to state responsibility can shed some light on China’s preferences in foreign policy making. The policy implication of this theory can be defined by the “communicative engagement” that takes place when the norm leaders attempt to socialise China by creating common interpretations and mutual expectations about what state responsibilities really are.

This language-focused approach can be achieved through discourse analysis. It is a qualitative method of analysing messages, and has enjoyed much popularity in the political science literature. Both content analysis and discourse analysis rely on the discussion of texts; however, they differ in the way that the texts are used. Content analysis aims to interpret and code texts so that it can tease out the key words according to the researcher’s code book. Discourse analysis, on the other hand, focuses on and examines the public presentation of an idea, value or identity. Any changes in those public presentations can correspond with changes in the definitions and interpretations of subjects. Therefore, discourse studies usually follow the empiricist tradition that “language should be studied in actual, attested, authentic instances of use, not as intuitive, invented, isolated sentences.” It aims to offer a close analysis of the target discourses when they “naturally occur in human and linguistic context.”

To conduct a discourse analysis, scholars first have to select a sample of texts which are most read by the mass public and sufficiently numerous so as to approximate a

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28 Ibid.
representative sample. Meanwhile, quantity should be matched with diversity. Texts from
different genres can be included in the examination, such as best sellers, textbooks,
newspapers, weekly, academic journals, poetry, opera and folk music. Ted Hopf’s
research on Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s is a good example of discourse analysis on
national identity and its influence on foreign policy. Hopf reviewed a sample of texts in
Russian from 1945 to 1966. Hopf included hundreds of journal articles, two memoirs, one
textbook, eight novels, many newspaper reports, one conference proceeding, and four
kinds of archives. It was a comprehensive examination of many texts across genres.
Hopf’s study drew the conclusion that the change in Soviet national identity led to the
Sino-Soviet split.

The most spontaneous type of data for discourse analysis is oral material, either
recorded or videotaped in natural context, ideally in a conversational setting. In this
sense, the ideal data for discourse studies should be collected in interviews and the like.
However, discourse analysis does not privilege a certain type of text. It can be either oral
or written texts, and it ranges from advertisements, research articles, interviews,
narratives, talks, life stories and newspaper editorials. As it is difficult to study China’s
perception of state responsibility by a discourse analysis based on the interviews with
high ranking Chinese political leaders an alternative method is a close examination of
various publications representing China’s official or governmental position. A few recent
studies on China’s “discourse of responsibility” have used sources from several official
publications of China’s newspapers and magazine. What is lacking in this new
scholarship is an intensive and consistent investigation focusing on one source throughout
the past thirty years since China opened up in 1978.

Therefore, this study takes Beijing Review as the sample text and examines the
discourse about China’s state responsibility from 1978 to 2010. This discourse analysis is

Rawi Abdelal, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston and Rose McDermott (New York: Cambridge University
36 Georgakopoulou and Goutsos, pp. 22-23.
37 Ibid.
38 For example, see David Scott, “China and the ‘Responsibilities’ of a ‘Responsible’ Power – The Uncertainties of
divided into three parts, including China’s bilateral relations, multilateral relations and China’s global governance in an attempt to reveal the notion of Chinese state responsibility from different dimensions. In Chapter Four and Five, this thesis also applies discourse analysis to the official documents, records, and news releases of governments and major international organisations. It aims to illustrate the dynamic socialisation processes between the norm leaders and China in a “two-way” path where norm leaders engage China into the standard of “state responsibility” which they favour; and where China either redefines its interpretation in line with the norms leaders, or tries to shape the norm in the context of normative contestation.

Case-Studies: China as a “Social State”

The research question proposed by this thesis is an explanatory one and thus lends itself to the use of case studies, histories and experiments as the preferred research methods. The nature of the study on international relations and foreign policy makes the controlled experimentation required by the scientific method impossible to achieve. Nevertheless, case studies can provide a useful method to exam the tractability of various hypothesis and explanations. Case studies are often a preferred strategy when “the investigator has little control over events,” and when “the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context”; a characteristic of this project which focuses on contemporary events in China’s foreign relations rather than historical experience and context. Compared with a conventional historical approach, the strength of conducting case studies in this thesis is reflected in its ability to utilise more comprehensive variety of evidence. To avoid a common concern about case studies – that they may provide insufficient basis for an empirical generalisation – this thesis looks at China’s pursuit of “responsible power” using a multiple set of cases. Based on this design, the evidence of the thesis will be considered more compelling, and the overall study more robust.

40 Ibid., p.8.
Since this project aims to explain China’s attempt to be a responsible power, the criteria of “responsible power” are the main source to guide the selection of the cases. Both China’s and Western countries’ definition of this concept should be considered. Most Western scholars have defined responsible power from the perspective of a state’s external duties. They believe that a responsible power should not only be a status quo state within the international system, but also should play an active role in world affairs.\textsuperscript{42} The contribution that a state makes toward maintaining peace and security in the international society and complying with international regimes are important factors in the definition of a responsible state. Surveying \textit{People’s Daily} from 1998 to 2001, Johnston reveals several foreign behaviours that China considers to be connected with a “responsible major power” status. Among those behaviours, active and constructive participation in multilateral institutions, as well as support for peace and development are officially regarded as the main duties of a responsible power in China.\textsuperscript{43} After the Cold War, the increasing attention to human security has led to some new duties for responsible powers, such as the promotion of global common values of human rights and representative governments.\textsuperscript{44}

The main purpose of the case-studies is to provide additional empirical evidence which can be used to examine the evolution of China’s interpretation of “responsible power,” as revealed by the content analysis. The statistical results indicate that China’s interpretation of responsibility has fully transformed from Foot’s hypothesised “peaceful state” (Phase One) to a “cooperative state” in international regimes (Phase Two). Recent foreign behaviours, however, still do not allow China to claim that it matches international expectations surrounding respect for or the promoting of human rights and representative democracy (Phase Three).\textsuperscript{45} Therefore, the focus of the case-studies is to observe China’s socialisation into the international standards of “state responsibilities” based on Phase Two and Three. As such, the studies concern China’s participation in


\textsuperscript{43} Johnston, pp. 148-149.


\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
international regimes and China’s interaction in regards to global values of human right and democracy.

Both types of cases are investigated using the relatively recent scholarship on China’s global governance. With the expansion of the understanding of security after the Cold War, global issues, such as nuclear non-proliferation, energy supplies and sustainable development, have been heatedly debated among global scholars and politicians. These problems of global concern increasingly need to be tackled through collective action by many actors in the international society and are laden with normative and material considerations and commitments.  

The study of global governance understands world politics as a “multilevel system” where national, regional and global political processes are inseparably connected, and new “spheres of authority” emerge beyond the sovereign states. It emphasises the power and influence of international organisations in that they provide legitimacy through “rational-legal authority” and technical expertise, as well as information.

Constructivist literature also suggests that international organisations are capable of defining the acceptable behaviour of states by framing or labelling the social context. China’s global governance and participation in international regimes has been regarded by the international community as a “test” of whether China is willing to shoulder its responsibility on the global range. Some scholars observe that China has largely complied with international norms and has become a party to all major international treaties and organisations. China’s compliance, however, does not necessarily mean that it shares all or many of the fundamental norms and values embedded in global governance with the West.

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49 Ibid., p. 711.
52 Ibid., p. 15.
of human security.\textsuperscript{53} This normative contestation has become a significant challenge to China’s pursuit of “responsible power” status, and has made it a difficult task for norm entrepreneurs to socialise China.

The first group of case-studies in Chapter Four focuses on China’s socialisation on international norms of human rights. The recently developed concept of “responsibility to protect” requires the international society to shoulder collective responsibility by responding through the UN when national authorities fail to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.\textsuperscript{54} However, some states have been critical about this Western enthusiasm to use force for the purpose of humanitarian intervention. China and Russia are concerned about the establishment of a legitimate excuse or precedent for external military intervention in Tibet and Chechnya.\textsuperscript{55} This current debate on the use of force has tremendous implications for the future shape of international norms for human rights and representative governments.\textsuperscript{56}

The first case-studies examine China’s responses towards arguments to proceed with some form of humanitarian intervention in Libya and Syria during “Arab Spring” from 2011 to 2012. The UN Security Council, as the main authority for humanitarian actions, has largely provided the legitimacy for this type of international cooperation.\textsuperscript{57} Therefore, this study observes and assesses China’s official votes and discourses in the UN Security Council to demonstrate the dynamics of norm diffusion and China’s state socialisation into human rights norms.

The second set of case-studies concentrates on China’s involvement in global environmental regimes. First, it adopts a network analysis to investigate China’s enhancing social status in international environmental governance. By calculating the degree centralities of nine countries in the social network, this study hypothesises the channel of environmental norm diffusion from the “norm leaders” consistently at the

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p. 188.
central positions to “norm novices”, such as China, continuously climbing the “social ladders.” Then, the case-studies focus on the Convention of Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Previous research suggests that China may face less compelling external incentives to comply with environmental norms when compared to human rights and trade issues. Yet, the absence of substantial material motivation makes these environmental regimes a suitable case to examine how ideational factors have shaped China’s definition of state responsibility in global environmental regimes. Moreover, this case explores how China has attempted to modify the norms in its favour and formalise its own reference group during the socialisation processes.

Significance of the Study

By examining China’s evolving interpretation of “responsible power” in an international social context, this thesis makes both a theoretical and empirical contribution to the research areas of International Relations and China studies. First, previous research on international socialisation has been largely built upon the empirical evidence accumulated from individual states’ experience of being integrated into the European Union. Eastern European countries’ involvement in the EU after the Cold War is particularly attractive to the students of this subject. However, inadequate attention has been given to some rising powers in the world system, especially those that are culturally and ethnically quite different from Western countries. This project enriches the constructivist literature on international norms by testing state socialisation theory in some specific cases of China’s foreign policy. It provides supporting evidence for the constructivist arguments that norms, values, and beliefs are equally powerful and can be as important as material factors in defining state preference and national interest.

Second, this study contributes to the academic debate on China’s pursuit of “responsible power” by bridging international expectations and China’s interpretation of “responsibility.” Theoretically, it explores the impact of international norms on China’s

understanding of its international responsibility through sociological and psychological approaches. Empirically, it seeks to highlight state responsibility as an evolving concept and political process in various issue areas. Methodologically, this project employs quantitative tools to measure the notion of “responsibility” in the Chinese context, qualitative methods to examine the contents of “responsible power” in Chinese official stand, and case-studies to discuss how this concept has been reflected on the policy level.

Third, this thesis offers an additional perspective, beyond the conventional wisdom of power politics, to consider China’s foreign behaviour and Chinese power. It emphasises that normative factors such as state responsibility have also shaped China’s foreign policy and accelerated China’s integration into the international community. Examining China’s power and responsibility in a changing social background, this thesis provides some insights on what a rising China would be in the international system, and how the world can accommodate a rising China.

**Organisation of the Thesis**

This project is divided into two parts. Part I (Chapters One and Two) serves as a literature review and theoretical basis to evaluate and give substance to the idea of China as a responsible power. Chapter One demonstrates that there are contending perspectives on power, responsibility and responsible power. It reviews the existing literature on China’s pursuit of a “responsible power” from different theoretical approaches, including realism, liberalism and constructivism. It aims to reveal contributions and gaps in each of these theoretical perspectives. Chapter Two establishes the theoretical framework for this project based on state socialisation theory. It discusses norm entrepreneurs and novice states as the main players in the dynamics of socialisation, and persuasion, social influence, mimicking and identification as micro-processes of state socialisation. Besides interaction on international level, this chapter also depicts the conditions and the results of norm internalisation and localisation on domestic politics. Moreover, regarding socialisation as a “two-way” path, the chapter offers a theoretical explanation of how individual states can influence normative society and shape the international norms.

Part II (Chapters Three, Four and Five) raises the questions of how the notion of
responsible power is reflected in China’s discourse and actual practices, and to what extent normative society has influenced China in terms of how it defines and performs its state responsibilities. Chapter Three begins by measuring the frequency rates of China’s official discourses that discuss state responsibility to provide a general trend of how interpretation has changed over time, and then compares these changes with the evolving standards of “responsible power” in international community. This is done in order to discover the degree of consistency or distance between domestic and international understanding. In the discourse analysis, this chapter reveals China’s interpretation of responsible power in its bilateral and multilateral relations, as well as its involvement in global issues. Chapters Four and Five are devoted to case-studies. In Chapter Four, this study focuses on China’s socialisation into international norms of human rights and democracy by looking at two cases, China’s responses to Libya and the Syria situations during the Arab Spring. It explains how major states have tried to socialise China, and why China reacted differently in the Libyan and Syrian civil wars. In Chapter Five, this thesis analyses China’s socialisation in the major international environmental regimes based on a social network analysis, and examines two case-studies of international environmental treaties. It suggests that by promoting “common but differentiated responsibility” and the non-securitisation of climate change, China has not only been influenced by the global environmental norms, but also tried to add the norms with some Chinese values.
CHAPTER ONE

China as a “Responsible Power”: Contending Perspectives

Power, Responsibility and Responsible Power

Power is a complicated and slippery concept. Yet international relations scholars are seemingly undeterred by its elusiveness when they define it. At the basic level, power refers to something feasible or practical.\(^1\) Being performance-oriented, power can imply “strength and the ability to accomplish a task.”\(^2\) Classical realist Hans Morgenthau regards power as “anything that establishes and maintains the control of man over man.”\(^3\) According to Morgenthau, to have power means to have control. Besides the realist conception of power, which focuses on the ability to employ material resources to compel others, some studies have demonstrated power’s more polymorphous character. From this perspective the concept of power can be more concrete and real in terms of one of its dimensions, such as economic, military and technological power.\(^4\) Keohane and Nye define power by drawing the distinction between behavioural power (hard and soft power) and resources power. Behavioural power concerns the ability to obtain desired outcome.\(^5\) A state can get an outcome by either relying on the “hard” power of coercion and payments or the “soft” power of attraction based on social, cultural, ideational or political affinity or attractiveness.\(^6\) Resource power measures the actor’s possession of resources which can be associated with the ability to achieve the result wanted.\(^7\) Barnett and Duvall argue that power is a production in social relations and affects other actors through those relations.\(^8\) According to the types and specificity of social relations, they generalise

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\(^7\) Keohane and Nye, p. 86.
\(^8\) Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall, “Power in International Politics,” International Organization, Vol. 59, Issue 1
power into four categories: compulsory, institutional, structural and productive power.\textsuperscript{9} Compulsory power allows one actor to “shape directly the circumstances or actions of another;” while institutional power works in indirect ways for one’s control over another.\textsuperscript{10} Structural power is connected with the co-constitutive internal relations of structural positions that define the social actors.\textsuperscript{11} Productive power emphasises the discourse, the social process and the systems of knowledge which can produce social identities and capacities.\textsuperscript{12}

States differ significantly in their power capabilities on the world arena. According to Waltz’s neorealist theory, states, as units in international system, are “distinguished primarily by their greater or lesser capacity for performing similar tasks.”\textsuperscript{13} Those states, which have economic, military, and other capacities that can make their interests, ideologies and policies be of concern to other states and members in international society, are considered “great powers.”\textsuperscript{14} The distribution of capacities among states influences the structure of international system. Even small actions taken by a great power can have a large effect on world affairs. Great powers contribute to international order by managing their relations with each other and exploiting their preponderance to influence in the direction of world affairs.\textsuperscript{15} As new states achieve great power status and earlier great powers decline or disappear, the international system changes.

Along with power comes responsibility, which means obligations to others.\textsuperscript{16} Compared with power, the concept of responsibility carries the idea of “duty and burden”; and therefore is more ethical in nature, and “laden with value-judgement.”\textsuperscript{17} Scholars of international law interpret state responsibility as a form of legal accountability focused on the “legal consequences of breaches on international law that are attributable to an

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., p. 48.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., pp. 49-52.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., pp. 52-55.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., pp. 55-57.
\textsuperscript{16} Rosenthal, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{17} Gerald Chan, p. 49.
international actor.” They argue that state responsibility involves the assessment or judgment of an international actor’s performance against international legal standards. The rules on state responsibility require states’ to fulfil various international legal obligations and insist upon “performance of normal standards of international conduct.” Based on the idea of “breaching an international obligation,” the international law and normative requirements of state responsibility includes all instances where a state injures another.

Many political scientists envision the notion of state responsibility as encompassing a broader range of prescribed or proscribed behaviour than posited by the international law. First, the state responsibility contains “all forms of international action” and it “provides the connection between the state and its actions.” Thus, a state is responsible and can be held accountable for both normatively good and bad “behaviour,” instead of simply crimes and wrong-doings under the international law. As such, a state can be praised or blamed, not just admonished or blamed for violating an international legal rule. Second, from legal sense, states’ international obligations have erga omnes quality. However, since a great power exerts more important and lasting impact on world affairs than smaller powers do, it is reasonable that great powers should be more directly accountable and be held to have “an increased moral responsibility of the just and responsible conduct” in international society. Therefore, the concept of great powers’ responsibility should be different with that of an ordinary state’s responsibility which is explicitly and strictly defined by international law. Great power responsibility rests on shared understanding and collective expectations of international society. Based on the

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19 Ibid., p. 24.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
27 Ibid., p. 5.
consensus among them, great powers bear several basic international obligations, including sustaining internal stability, upholding regional order, maintaining international security order, obeying international law, promoting free commerce, providing humanitarian aids, and cooperating in global affairs.  

In his essay *Politics as a Vocation*, Max Weber articulates two maxims to illustrate the paradox of political ethics, including “ethic of ultimate ends” and “ethic of responsibility.” The former emphasises the importance of intention in considering the moral dimension of actions. The latter, on the other hand, focuses on the consequence of the action, which means that the morality of an act is largely determined by the consequence that stems from it, while intent is a subordinate factor. Based on this bifurcated ethic, Weber and other political philosophers further argue that responsible power is a concept which is sensitive to both ultimate ends (intentions) and responsibility (consequences). Contemporary political scientists’ interpretation of “international responsibility” resonate Weber’s idea. They suggest that responsibility has two components that state should fulfil various “responsible obligations and duties as well as be accountable for the consequences of their action.” As such, a state’s international responsibility has legal, political and moral roots.

Most political scientists attempt to define responsible power by focusing on states’ international obligations and their behaviour in the world arena. They demonstrate two basic rules to define the concept of responsible power in international realm. First, a responsible state should be a status quo power and an “insider” in the international system. It should comply with the rule-based multilateral international order. And it should not only accept the values and norms of international community, but also act in

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28 Nolan, p. 31.
30 Rosenthal, pp. 43-45.
32 Ibid.
support of existing international arrangements.\textsuperscript{35} Second, a responsible power is an active participant in world affairs, including the formulation of international rules, collective governance, and management of regional balance of power. \textsuperscript{36} This notion of responsible power is consistent with the evolving concepts of sovereignty that have developed after the Cold War and have challenged the Westphalian notion of “absolute sovereignty.” Instead of being the sole supreme authority over a certain territory, state sovereignty is regarded as a “dynamic and socially constructed force” and is related to various “moral purposes,” such as embodying “norms of legitimacy and rightful action.”\textsuperscript{37} Recent studies further suggest that domestic duties and the necessity of providing “responsible governance” within state’s own territory are additionally essential indictors of responsible power.\textsuperscript{38} Therefore, sovereignty embodies and encompasses a “dual responsibility”: it requires that states mutually respect each other state’s sovereignty and it requires that each state respects the basic rights of the people within its own territory.\textsuperscript{39}

Rosemary Foot has detailed the evolution of the idea of responsible power and state responsibility after the Second World War. In the first three decades after the Second World War (the 1940s-the 1970s), the great powers built rules for international society based on their common interests. The management role of great powers after the war is partly reflected in the United Nations Charter, which acknowledges the sovereign equality of states and the norm of non-interference in domestic affairs and pacific settlement of disputes.\textsuperscript{40} States that supported those rules and embraced international laws and legal norms were considered responsible and thus eligible for the membership within the international society.\textsuperscript{41} The 1980s witnessed the expansion of the definition of responsible power to include the idea that those states which comply with international regimes and

organizations that “made up the substance of international life” would be considered responsible powers.\textsuperscript{42} This additional criterion emphasised states’ contribution to the core international society goal of international peace and security. Foot further suggests that there is a third phase which evolved with the development of new and broader understanding of security in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These broader notions of security which encompass both human rights and domestic security have been contested among scholars and politicians, yet Foot argues they evidence that the definition of responsible power can now be understood in the context of connection and interaction between domestic and international realms. Thus, a responsible state is one that can protect and promote the individual security within and outside its sovereignty. In addition, it should foster effective exercise of representative democracy and civil society in both domestic and foreign policy.\textsuperscript{43}

**China’s Attempt to be a “Responsible Power”**

Since the middle of the 1990s, China has emphasised its efforts to play a positive role in international society as a “responsible power.” China claimed that its attempts were evidenced by its constructive efforts in supporting Southeast Asian states during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. The Chinese government contributed to solving the crisis by not devaluing its currency and by offering aid packages and low-interest loans to some Southeast Asian states.\textsuperscript{44} Along with its increasing involvement and cooperation with regional and global institutions, China has tried to replace its old image of “either aloof or hegemonic” with an image of “a responsible and cooperative great power.”\textsuperscript{45} Since the 2000s, China has developed more detailed and articulated versions of this “responsibility diplomacy,” such as “peaceful rising/developing” and “harmonious society/world.” China’s former Premier Wen Jiabao first mentioned the notion of China’s “peaceful rise” in his speech at Harvard University in 2003. He noted that China was a “gaige kaifang yu

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., pp.9-11.
“Reforming and Opening-up” and peaceful rising]. Former President Hu Jintao addressed on the Fourth Plenary Session of the 16th CPC Central Committee in 2004 when he first advocated the establishment of a “harmonious society” (和谐社会). In the following year, President Hu further called for “common security and prosperity” and a “harmonious world” at the plenary meeting of the United Nations Summit. Ever since, China has redefined and emphasised some of the key concepts in its foreign relations in order to enhance its image as a responsible power in global affairs. For example, in recent years China has loosened its strict adherence to the absolute sovereignty and non-interference principle and has begun to participate in UN authorised peacekeeping missions, performing certain limited and conditional interference. Based on the modified Chinese preferences and interests, Chinese scholar Chen Zhimin defines China’s state responsibility in four aspects: the domestic responsibility as a big developing country, the legal responsibility as a qualified sovereign state, the additional duty as a great power, and the special responsibility as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Nevertheless, how we can interpret China’s self-construction of a responsible and peaceful rising power has given rise to numerous debates among various theoretical approaches.

**Rationalist Approach**

**Realism**

Classical realists have made their contribution to the study of foreign policy by emphasising national security and state survival as the top priority. The tradition of political realism can be traced back to ancient Greece when historian Thucydides...
identified and analysed what he described as the inevitable conflicts among ancient Greek city-states. He argued that states have restricted foreign policy choices because they must conform to the principles of power politics. Since states are highly unequal in their powers and capabilities and there are a few “great powers” which enjoy a dominant status, states are compelled to eschew non-power considerations to ensure their continued survival.\

According to Renaissance Italian political theorist Machiavelli, power and deception are the two crucial means for the conduct of foreign policy, which is largely based on the calculation of one’s power and interests against those of the rivals. Hobbes, the 17th Century English political philosopher writing in the context of the English Civil War posed “the security dilemma” by comparing domestic politics and international politics. He suggested that domestic peace and personal security can only be achieved by the establishment of a sovereign state; whereas there is no escape from international insecurity which is rooted in anarchy among separate states.

Neoclassical realism, represented by Hans Morgenthau, inherits the tradition of Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes. Morgenthau regards power as the immediate goal for political struggles among international states. The ways that states acquire, maintain and demonstrate power determine the technique of political action. The exercise of political power in foreign policy inevitably confronts moral dilemmas, because the morality in foreign affairs, which belongs to public sphere, is very different from that in private sphere. Both classical and neoclassical realists suggest certain normative values in foreign policy and provide a political and ethical interpretation on international relations theories.

Rather than following the traditional and normative approach of Morgenthau, contemporary neorealists have attempted to seek a scientific explanation of the international political system. Kenneth Waltz, writing from a behaviourist approach, emphasises the anarchical structure of the world system on which foreign policymaking is

dependent. He argues that a state must pursue power in order to protect and promote its national interest. However, preponderant power or excessive use of power is unnecessary because it can provoke a hostile alliance among other states who feel threat, in short state power may be checked by the balance of power. As evidence of the balance of power mechanism, Waltz argues that the interaction among China, Japan and South Korea are creating a new balance of power in East Asia.\(^{55}\) John Mearsheimer agrees with Waltz on power politics. From Mearsheimer’s perspective, great powers always compete with each other to gain power at the expense of other states.\(^{56}\) Moreover, representing offensive realist thought (as opposed to Waltz’s “defensive realism”), he indicates that hegemony is the final goal for states searching for opportunities to gain power. Based on this assumption, China will unavoidably translate its economic might into military power, and China will be likely to emerge as a potential hegemon in East Asia.\(^{57}\)

Depicting the hierarchy nature of international relations, Power Transition Theory argues that a rising power such as China will challenge the existing world order and disrupt the relative power balance of the international system.\(^{58}\) It predicts that war is inevitable when the military capacity of a rising power approaches that of the incumbent powers.\(^{59}\) This theory has resonated with many policy-makers, especially those in the United States. For example, the former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice suggested that a rising China was a potential threat in Asia-Pacific region and would alter the balance of power for its own benefits as a revisionist state and a “strategic competitor” of the United States.\(^{60}\) Based on this theory, sceptics indicate that the peaceful rise of China is not attainable due to the lack of an historical precedent and China’s unfavourable external security environment, reflected by the US-Japan alliance, US unilateralism, and


\(^{57}\) Ibid., p. 401.


unstable neighbouring countries as well as the negative impacts of globalisation.61

IR studies in China have a strong tradition of realist Chinese cultural elements, a sort of power politics approach with “Chinese characteristics.”62 Under a realist framework, some Chinese scholars have questioned the validity and reliability of the standard of “responsible power.” Zhou argues that since the definition and standard of “responsible power” has not reached a consensus, it remains uncertain which criteria China should follow.63 In addition, He argues Western countries, led by the United States, attempt to make the notion of “responsible power” better suit their own interests and values.64 Other Chinese commentators have also criticised the Western notion of “responsible power.” They argue that the legal and normative standards which comprise “responsible power” are an imposed “responsibility” on China, and are merely another means through which the West can “constrain” China’s rise.65 Rather than eschewing moral or normative considerations in foreign policy, some Chinese scholars contend that China should behave as “moral agent” in international society, but not necessarily adhere to Western standards.66 They indicate that in an anarchical world what responsibility China should shoulder is entirely determined by China’s own capacity and national interest without regard for the views, capabilities or normative commitments of Western great powers.67

Realist approaches emphasise China’s interest-oriented behaviour, and define China’s national interest as “the common objectives of enhancing wealth and relative power.”68 From this perspective, China’s foreign policy aims to maximise its power based on cost-benefit analysis and being a “responsible power” is not helpful or favourable. Chinese realist scholars maintain that rising powers, compared with the current great

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64 Ibid., p. 46.
66 Ibid., p. 47.
powers, usually face adverse and isolating international environment when they make efforts to be a “responsible power” – and this environment would largely increase the cost of China’s in its attempt to be “responsible.” Moreover, many Chinese IR specialists believe that China should try to save space for future strategic manoeuvre rather than merely aim to enhance its international image by taking a “too ambitious or burdensome role.” Based on this strategic concern, China’s should “speak its responsibility more ambiguously without explicit commitment” so as to not to raise international expectations. A relatively low profile in international arena is more suitable for a rising China to secure a favourable environment to facilitate its economic development.

Some realist scholars hold that “responsible power” and “peaceful rising” is simply the political slogan used by Chinese policymakers without actual policy prescriptions to achieve concrete foreign policy objectives. Another interpretation from realist perspective is that China takes its image of responsible power seriously as an ideal, but in fact it pursues quite different foreign policies in practice to protect and promote its national interest. Scholars also argue that China’s responsible power image has practical functions. The “responsible power” discourse is a part of China’s rhetorical efforts to gain recognition as a “legitimate great power” in international community. It enables China to engage with evolving conceptions of the existing international order. Since the 1980s, Chinese foreign policy has attempted to sustain an international environment which is supportive of its economic growth and social stability. The verbal pledge that China operates according to international norms and institutions is, to some extent, a counterweight the “China threat theory.” The promotion of China as a responsible great power is designed to persuade other countries, especially China’s neighbours, to believe

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69 Zhou Fangyin, p. 50.  
70 Ibid., pp. 49-50.  
72 Ibid.  
73 Irvine, p. 36.  
76 Ibid., p. 289.  
that a growing China will not threaten their interests.\footnote{Glaser and Medeiros, p. 306.} As such, China tends to comply with the international rules and norms whenever they suit its immediate interests but disobey them if they undermine China’s national interest.\footnote{Shaun Breslin, “China’s Emerging Global Role: Dissatisfied Responsible Great Power,” \textit{Politics}, Vol. 30, Suppl.1 (2010), p. 53.} Therefore, in the eyes of most realists, China’s quest for a responsible power is either political rhetoric or a pragmatic approach to enhance Chinese national interest. They forecast a dissatisfied and revisionist China, waiting to challenge the current rules in the world system.

\textbf{Liberalism}

Unlike realists who are concerned about the rise of any great power, liberalists are more likely to scrutinize the “political nature” of a rising China and embrace China’s effort to be a responsible power.\footnote{Barry Buzan, “China in International Society: Is ‘Peaceful Rise’ Possible?” \textit{The Chinese Journal of International Politics}, Vol. 3 (2010), p. 33.} Contemporary liberalism generally includes four strands of thought, namely economic interdependence, international institutions, democratic republics and pluralist liberalism. Each theory can to some extent bolster Chinese foreign policy under the identity of responsible power. First, economic interdependence can discourage states from war and conflict against each other because their economic relationship has closely connected them and warfare would threaten the benefits found in the economic cooperation.\footnote{Stephen M. Walt, “International Relations: One World, Many theories,” \textit{Foreign Policy}, No. 110 (1998), p.32.} From this perspective, the strategic choice to embrace economic globalisation rather than detach from it has given China a further opportunity to be a responsible power in international society and facilitate its peaceful rise.\footnote{Zheng Bijian, “China’s ‘Peaceful Rise’ to Great-Power Status,” \textit{Foreign Affairs}, Vol. 84, No. 5 (2005), p. 20.} China’s increasing interest and dependence in its interactions with other states has transferred great power politics from a traditional zero-sum game to a win-win competition with absolute gains for each participant.\footnote{Deng Yong and Thomas G. Moore, “China views Globalisation: Toward a New Great-Power Politics?” \textit{The Washington Quarterly}, Vol. 27, No. 3 (2004), p. 123.} And China’s increasing involvement in world economy will lead to its domestic political and economic request for greater liberalisation.\footnote{Jeffrey W. Legro, “What China Will Want: The Future Intentions of a Rising Power,” \textit{Perspectives on Politics}, Vol. 5, No. 3 (2007), p. 520.}
The second school of liberalism suggests that international institutions can help states overcome self-interested behaviour by encouraging them to sacrifice some immediate gains for the larger benefits that can accrue from long term cooperation.\footnote{Stephen M. Walt, “International Relations: One World, Many theories,” p. 32.} According to neo-liberal institutionalist theory, even though a state pursues its own interests, it may place certain constraints on its behaviour for diplomatic advantages. These liberals argue that the fulfilment of self-interested national goals do not necessarily lead to international conflict, but rather can be compatible with China’s cooperative behaviour and compliance with international regimes.\footnote{Justin S. Hempson-Jones, “The Evolution of China’s Engagement with International Governmental Organizations: Towards a Liberal Foreign Policy?” \textit{Asian Survey}, Vol. 45, No. 5 (2005), pp. 717-718.} Since the 1980s China has significantly increased its participation in international economic and political institutions. Scholars predict that with its increasing integration into international mechanisms, China will be more willing to play a responsible role in the international community.\footnote{Xia Liping, “China’s Efforts as a Responsible Power,” in \textit{Asian-Pacific Security: Policy Challenges}, ed. David W. Lovell (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, 2003), p. 74.}

Moreover, the neo-liberal institutionalist approach stresses the importance of reputation in the conduct of foreign relations. Similar to the situation of “repeated games” in game theory, a state which “values its ability to make future agreements” cherishes reputation as a crucial resource. The most essential aspect of a state’s reputation in world arena is the “belief of others that it will keep its future commitments even when a particular situation, myopically viewed, makes it appear disadvantageous to do so.”\footnote{Robert Keohane, \textit{After Hegemony} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 116.} Thus, if Chinese foreign policy makers pay enough attention to China’s international reputation, China will engage in responsible behaviour in world society.

Based on the assumption that democratic states are inherently more peaceful than authoritarian states, neo-liberalist democratic theory suggests that the spread of democracy will build a peaceful international system.\footnote{Walt, p. 32.} Arguing that liberal states, founded on individual rights, are “fundamentally against war,”\footnote{Michael W. Doyle, “Liberalism and World Politics,” \textit{American Political Science Review}, Vol. 80, No. 4 (1986), p. 1151.} this strand of liberal theory has been particularly prevalent in many western countries, and received much policy resonance, especially from the United States. For instance, based on the
proposition that “democracies don’t attack each other,” former President Clinton regarded democratisation as the “third pillar” of his foreign policy. However, much criticism of Chinese foreign and domestic policy is premised upon this theoretical assumption. Although since the 1980s China has made improvements to its civil liberties, human rights, democracy and commitment to “rule by law” China still has long way to go in the transition from the authoritarian rule to a more democratic form of governance. In the absence of such shift, some scholars believe that China, in important ways, will remain outside global society and cannot meet the standard of a “responsible power.”

Pluralist liberalism has emphasised the domestic state-society relations and the influence of domestic groups on foreign policy making. These studies suggest that a states’ foreign behaviour should respond to the changing desires of groups in domestic society. Some scholars share this domestic “demand-driven” approach to analyse China’s claim to be a responsible power. They believe that the Chinese Communist Party’s emphasis on economic development and China’s public opinion have contributed to China’s rhetoric and behaviour as a responsible power in international society. However, other scholars remain sceptical of how China can achieve both political diversity and economic integration. From this perspective, China’s attempt to be a responsible power will be in vain unless China becomes more politically liberal.

Contribution and Critique

Despite the rich scholarship on power and responsibility, the topic of China’s quest for responsible power has been neither widely nor thoroughly studied. The current literature about the topic has, to some extent, been dominated by the theoretical approaches of realism and liberalism. These theoretical approaches have been used to analyse and explain what has become a rather large amount of empirical evidence. Influenced by its “century of humiliation,” China has been sensitive to its sovereignty.

95 Buzan, p. 32.
96 Ibid., p. 32.
This national “complex” has become a seedbed for a realist interpretation of Chinese foreign policy. Many examples of China’s adoption of the realist approach to foreign affairs can be identified through examining China’s pragmatic diplomacy since the 1980s. At the same time, China has been deeply involved into world affairs because of its Reforming and Opening up policy, especially in the economic arena. Thus, liberals can also empirically substantiate their claims by evidencing China’s participation in regional and international institutions, such as the United Nations and ASEAN.

However, it cannot be denied that the realist and liberal approaches to exploring China’s pursuit of responsible power suffer from several disadvantages. First, regarding the nature and organisation of material forces as the fundamental fact about international system, both realists and liberalists have underestimated the importance of the “constitutive effects of ideas” in international relations.\(^{97}\) The “normative pressure” from the international society is largely dismissed by the rationalist approach, especially neorealism. Under this paradigm, China’s attempt to be a “responsible power” is either disingenuous rhetoric or a means to maximise its power and national interest in the world arena. Neoliberal scholars have studied China’s pursuit to responsible power based mainly on the concept of economic interdependence and international institutions. They emphasise economic benefits to explain China’s cooperative behaviour. They have a relatively more optimistic view of China’s rise within the international system. For example, in terms of Sino-US relations, Lampton observes that the economic interdependence can bind the two countries together and make the conflicts between them more expensive and thus unlikely to happen.\(^{98}\) Although neoliberalism has noticed the significance of international institutions and state’s “reputation” in the world featured by economic interdependence, its theoretical commitment to the notion of “absolute gains” does not break through the model built by realism; the approach continues to assume that the fundamental structure of international politics is material rather than social.\(^{99}\) Therefore, both realist and liberal theory cannot explain China’s cooperative and

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99 Ibid., p. 34.
compliant behaviour without substantial motivation of material benefits or power maximisation. When they treat national interest as exogenously given and as a “predetermined abstract concept existing independent of social forces,” the potential that belief, norms, values and ideas in international society can also influence China’s interpretation of national interest and thus change its foreign behaviour is neglected.

Second, rationalist theories have difficulty explicating foreign policy making. As Kenneth Waltz has repeatedly indicated, neorealism as an international relations theory is not “a theory of foreign policy making.” Neorealism focuses on international system of anarchy where the function of different units (states) is constant and similar to each other. Based on the assumption that all states, despite their internal differences are unitary actors with a single motive – the wish to survive, a neorealist theory explains how power politics shape states’ behaviour. As such states’ behaviour is determined and built at the international level, not at the national level. In contrast, a theory of foreign policy aims to make determinate predictions for dependent variables which can measure the behaviour of individual states. It seeks to explain why states that have similar status in the international system behave in different ways. The differences in behaviour are explained with reference to internal social, historical, institutional and political factors. From this perspective, national level variables are an important, if not primary basis to understand world politics. Neoliberalism has paid attention to the role of domestic factors in shaping state interests and influencing state’s foreign behaviour. However, there are still some doubts about Chinese foreign behaviour which cannot be explained solely by economic motives or political pluralism.

Third, the rationalist approach overlooks the importance of “political rhetoric” in China’s international relations. When it argues that China’s attempt of being a “responsible power” is “mere rhetoric,” rationalism suggests what matters is not the

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language China uses but the “material power resources upon which it can draw.”\textsuperscript{104} Whilst much incongruity can be found between what a state has said and what it has actually done, Krebs and Jackson point out in their study that “talk is not always cheap.”\textsuperscript{105} Examining the “failed communication” between China and the United States before the Korean War in 1950s, Sartori indicates that state leaders are likely to fulfil their public rhetorical commitments to avoid any substantial domestic and international costs.\textsuperscript{106} Schimmelfennig also suggests that “rhetoric action” can explain how an actor is expected to abide by the “collective interests” and comply with its obligations, because it cares about its reputation and credibility as a qualified community member.\textsuperscript{107} Focusing on EU’s policy toward climate change, Cass points out that the state can face the “norm entrapment” which prevents it from pursuing a policy that violates a norm because of the state’s “prior rhetorical affirmation of the norm.”\textsuperscript{108} Therefore, more appreciation should be given to the Chinese discourse or rhetoric about its “responsible power” status and to what extent that the rhetoric has regulated China’s behaviour.

\textit{Constructivist Approach}

As a realist policy-maker, former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice comments that US-China bilateral relationship has been “rooted more in common interests than common values.”\textsuperscript{109} And the United State should work closely with its democratic allies with whom it “shares values” to defeat the challenges to the international system.\textsuperscript{110} This observation suggests that despite her realist perspective, Rice believes that social factors, like values, guide American foreign policy as much as material factors, otherwise differentiating between “ally” and “enemy” or “competitor” based on “values” would be relatively superfluous. Social constructivist theory in international relations is regarded as

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 38.
\textsuperscript{109} Condoleezza Rice, “Rethinking the National Interest: American Realism for a New World,” \textit{Foreign Affairs}, Vol. 87, No. 4 (2008), p. 3.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., p. 6.
the “middle ground” between rationalist and relativist theories, because it concerns how the “subjective and intersubjective worlds interact in the social construction of reality” and it also seeks to explain and examine how structure and agents are mutually constitutive. Following the logic of appropriateness which highlights the “normative rationality” of political action, the constructivist approach emphasises non-material factors, such as belief, value, norm, rule and culture, and depicts the international society as “socially constructed.” Constructivist approaches may be more appropriate to explain Chinese state action as numerous studies have indicated that collective belief and ideas play important roles in China’s foreign policy making. Indeed, it is evident that understanding a rising China is not merely about how much relative power that China has gained, but is also related to what China intends to do with its increasing power; and whether China intends to comply with the existing rules as a great power. A state obeys the rules in international relations not only because it may be under coercion, or out of self-interest, but its actions also can stem from a normative belief that a rule or an institution is legitimate and should be complied with. This normative belief or perception of the international rules can, in many instances, largely explain a state’s behaviour and how it defines its national interest.

**National Identity**

Instead of regarding China’s quest for responsible power as either political rhetoric or as an emerging liberal trend of Chinese foreign policy, constructivists discuss the topic from ideational or idealist perspectives; i.e. ideas and self-perceptions of identity are concrete factors that can explain state behaviour. Recent constructivist scholarship has concentrated on China’s national identity construction. This new scholarship maintains that each nation has its particular identity which leads to a distinct understanding of

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113 For examples, see Legro’s discussion about China’s national ideas in “What China Will Want.”
115 Ibid., p. 381.
state’s motivation, preference, interest and behaviour. And a state understands others “according to the identity it attributes to them,” while “simultaneously reproducing its own identity through daily social practice.” Those studies argue that the concept of responsible power is a component national identity which China has embraced in its self-development process and interactions with the rest of the world. Therefore, China’s aspiration of being a “responsible great power” may suggest a profound national identity redefinition.

There are two main types of research on China’s attempt to be a responsible power as a facet of China’s national identity. Some scholars have explained China’s pursuit of responsible power through an agent-oriented approach. They argue that national identity as a macro-level political outcome is derived from micro-level factors within the state. First, the preferences of political leadership and the leading political parties can exert a direct influence on national identity construction. The fourth generation of Chinese leadership embraces “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” the concept of harmonised society and the role of responsible superpower as symbols of national identity. Second, in order to discuss responsible power as one of the aspects of Chinese national identity, scholars have traced the source of the identity to China’s diplomatic practices and economic development. They point out that in the course of building a harmonious, peaceful and prosperous world, China is seeking its new identity as a responsible state. The economic achievements resulting from the opening and reform policies have provided a material basis for China’s role of a responsible regional state. Third, China’s national identity as a responsible power is rooted in its political culture, and can be understood through political psychology. Recent economic development has given

121 Kong.
China more confidence as it considers and rearticulates its role in world affairs. China’s official construction of self-identity is established upon both the “central kingdom complex” and “strong China complex.” Based on this sentiment, China has been portraying its identity as a potential “responsible world power” in the international society.\(^\text{122}\) Moreover, this identity construction is not static but a changing process influenced by China’s interaction with the international society.\(^\text{123}\)

Rather than analysing and interpreting how China’s responsible power identity has been shaped, other scholars focus on how the construction of a responsible power identity has significant implications for the foreign policymaking of contemporary China. Besides emphasising economic development and adherence to the sovereign rights, China will gradually become more willing to comply with international norms and institutions to show that it is a responsible state.\(^\text{124}\) The identity and role of a responsible power in world affairs will lead China to more active participation in resolving international problems, as well as economic cooperation and regional security.\(^\text{125}\)

Some studies examine the influence of Chinese national identity as a responsible power on its foreign policy by focusing on China’s relationship with a specific country. The Sino-Russo relationship has been investigated as an example of how this self-perception has affected foreign policy. It is found that managing its relations with Russia since the 1980s China has transformed its national identity from a “regime challenger” to a “responsible power.”\(^\text{126}\) As a result of this identity transformation, China has attempted to maintain the stability of the current international system, and has changed its attitude toward international institutions from “strongly resistant” to “active integration.” Under its responsible power identity, China advocates equality and mutual benefits in international society, on which the strategic partnership between China and Russia is built.\(^\text{127}\)

\(^{124}\) Zhang, p.295.
\(^{125}\) Kong.
\(^{127}\) Ibid., p. 57.
China’s responsible power identity has also been applied to the study of China’s relations with regional organisations. Wang focuses on China-ASEAN relations from the perspective of identity politics. He discusses the transformation of Chinese national identity during and after the Cold War, and the corresponding changes of China-ASEAN relations. His research analyses the logic of the evolution of identity and foreign relations. He concludes that China’s identity as a “responsible regional power” implies that China would be willing to create the regional institutions with other countries as part of its strategic emphasis on its neighbours. Perhaps more significantly, he argues that in order to demonstrate its responsibility China would like to offer more public goods in future regional arrangements rather than only pursuing its own national interest. This national identity of responsible power encourages China to establish strategic partnership with ASEAN countries and actively participate in regional dialogue within the framework of ASEAN.128

State Socialisation

Borrowing theoretical tools from social psychology and sociology, the concept of socialisation is acknowledged by both rationalist and constructivist international relations scholarship. Structural realism recognises that structure can influence agent’s actions through the mechanisms of selection and socialisation.129 Agents which are playing the role of state in the international stage can internalise role expectations and comply with the norms related to a specific role.130 Nevertheless, structural realism has not fully examined co-constitutive nature between agents and structures (nor can it examine given its theoretical commitments) during the process of state socialisation. Socialisation literature from constructivist approach can provide an alternative interpretation of China’s pursuit of “responsible power” status in international society, in addition to an explanation based on national identity. It argues that China’s continued socialisation into various global norms and standards will create a “status quo” power and thus help

maintain the post-WWII international institutional arrangements. Moreover, China’s efforts to be accepted as a responsible state in international society will be largely judged in terms of its adherence to the international norms and rules during the socialisation process.

This perspective is reflected in recent studies of socialisation which have concentrated on China’s involvement in multilateral institutions and revealed China’s response to the “normative pressure” from the international relations. Examining China’s engagement with multilateral security institutions, Johnston and Evans find that neither material interests nor relative power maximisation can satisfactorily explain China’s participation in CTBT and landmines protocol. Rather, in these two cases China has been sensitive and responsive in terms of policy to its national image or reputation, which they identify as the “normative pressure” of social back-patting and opprobrium. Based on the interviews with China’s arms control specialists, they observe that during the socialisation process, the Chinese government gradually realised that joining those treaties is “part of a world historical trend” and “part of China’s role as a responsible major power.” They argue that when considering the CTBT and the landmines protocol China’s has “undergone a socialisation process to the extent that it is sensitive to the normative image effect garnered by participation in intuitions.” In addition, they point out that Chinese responses to social pressure depends upon the scope and type of institutional arrangement; the larger and more legitimate the international institution is, the greater social benefits and cost it can exert onto China.

Discussing the domestic impact of international institutions, Su argues that China has been changing its interpretation of absolute sovereignty and redefined its national interest and national security goals as it engages with international institutions. He suggests

134 Ibid., p. 253.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid., pp. 252-253.
137 Su Changhe, “China in the World and the World in China: The Domestic Impact of International Institutions on
that this engagement is a process of “learning, adjusting and adapting” for China to be “socialised” and become an “international state.” Su also observes the international norm localisation in China occurs through the domestic legislative process. However, without more detailed empirical studies, the process of how China internalises an international norm into the domestic legal and political system remains elusive.

These empirical and theoretical issues aside, there is an additional concern about whether China’s statist values at the domestic level and in global governance would be the obstacles to its acceptance of the emerging international norms of human security and individual sovereignty. Since it has not fully subscribed to Western liberal norms based upon which most theories of compliance are formulated, China seems at times to be seeking “to develop differentiated – rather than uniform – norms of global governance”; to in effect transmogrify or alter these liberal norms as they are articulated within the international system. Some scholars have noticed that during the process of state socialisation, China has not only been affected by the international standard of “responsible power,” but also tried to influence the norm evolution and reshape global agendas to better reflect its concerns and interests. For instance, examining China’s increasingly important role in global economic governance, Chin and Thakur suggest that China has demonstrated a “development model” featured by purposive state intervention to guide market development and national corporate growth. This model, premised on state control and direction of key industries and domestic sectors, has been posted as an alternative of “Anglo-American developmental model,” and has proven to be attractive to some developing economies, such as Brazil and India. China’s “development model” has been the impetus to the creation of common values of “a greater sense of global obligation and increased stewardship” among those rising powers.

Nevertheless, socialisation theory also suggests China’s state socialisation into the

138 Ibid., p. 71.
140 Shambaugh, China Goes Global: The Partial Power, p. 131.
141 Chin and Thakur, pp. 122-124.
142 Ibid., p. 120.
international norms of “responsible power” remains uncompleted. Checkel reveals two steps of state socialisation into international norms. A state complies with the norm based on “strategic calculation” or “role playing” at the initial stage; and then it gradually internalises the norm which is reflected in its evolved national identity.\textsuperscript{143} China, for reasons yet to be explained remains between the first and second stages.\textsuperscript{144}

\textit{Contribution and Critique}

Based on ideational approaches, constructivists argue that China’s pursuit of responsible power is either determined by its evolving national identity or explained by those international norms China has “learnt” during the process of state socialisation. Those non-material factors that influence China’s foreign behaviour are socially-constructed instead of exogenously given by material factors. The scholarship on China’s emerging national identity of a “responsible great power” has established the significance of how China perceives itself when it interacts with the rest of the world; and how this perception can be reflected on its foreign policy. The state socialisation theory provides students an alternative approach to explaining China’s attempt to be a “responsible power” by observing how the international norms affect China through the mechanisms of socialisation.

Despite its important theoretical and empirical contributions what is lacking in this new scholarship are well-established theoretical frameworks as well as comprehensive empirical studies. Scholars, particularly those from China, have realised that constructivist theory and the concept of national identity may better explain China’s quest for responsible power. However, without more theoretical development and additional empirical support, the existing literature cannot explicate “why” and “how” responsible power is rooted in Chinese national identity rather than being “empty rhetoric” or simply a reflection of the liberal trend in Chinese foreign policy. Moreover, it remains unclear where China’s national identity of a “responsible power” comes from and why China has attempted to establish and strengthen this identity rather than other alternative or

\textsuperscript{144} Shambaugh, \textit{China Goes Global: The Partial Power}, p. 131.
competing aspects of its identity.

Compared with approaches which seek to provide explanations of foreign policy behaviour on national identity, state socialisation approaches seem to better illustrate how the norms in international society exert influence on China’s preference and interests and why China’s aims to build the image of a responsible state beyond material benefits. Few in-depth studies have revealed the dynamic processes of China’s socialisation into the normative society of “responsible states.” Johnston has proposed three micro-mechanisms of socialisation, including mimicking, social influence and persuasion, to study China’s interaction with international institutions. Examing state’s compliance with the nuclear non-proliferation regime, Rublee applies the theoretical tools of persuasion, social conformity and identification. Those new theoretical attempts have cast light on the future study of China’s “responsible power” pursuit from sociological and social psychologist perspectives.

Meanwhile, many critiques have also indicated that the limited scholarship on China’s rule conforming behaviour through socialisation continues to require a more “solid empirical foundation of reliable and valid generalisations.” Most empirical investigations of state socialisation during the past twenty years have focused on the integration of European Union, more specifically how the Eastern European states have been socialised to the normative society of EU and adapted the rules and norms of EU. Although some recent scholarship has paid attention to states in the Middle East, Latin American and Southeast Asia, there are no comprehensive case-studies examining the processes and consequences of state socialisation beyond European states. Furthermore,

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the previous empirical studies emphasise the norm diffusion of liberal democracy and human rights, while neglecting the international norms which involve the other forms of global governance.150

Most socialisation literature attempts to discuss state’s conforming behaviour based on external forces. However, some studies suggest that China’s globalisation and integration into international society stem from more from “internal factors” rather than from foreign pressure or outside influences.151 Following this logic, an early state socialisation study may have a tendency to underestimate the domestic factors that could motivate China to pursue a “responsible power” status in the international society. Recent research which has examined the roles that domestic factors play in norm localisation process, such as “cultural match,” domestic legal system, domestic institutions and political structure is promising in this regard.152 Those domestic variables would be essential to understand why China’s accepts and internalises some components of “responsible state” more easily than others.

Summary

A review of the literature suggests that although there has been a lot of discussion about China’s responsibility in international society commensurate with its increasing national power, China’s attempt to be a “responsible power” has not been scrutinised under a well-established theoretical framework or with robust empirical research. Most Western realists believe that “responsible power” is a part of China’s political rhetoric without any real policy implications. The image of “responsible state” is based on China’s own strategic calculation, and thus serves as a tool of political manoeuvre and national interest in international arena. Chinese scholars from the realist tradition argue essentially

the same point when they suggest that the norms and prescription of “responsible power” is a western-created value and standard, and has been imposed on China for the purpose of constraining its rise within a competitive international system. The liberal school, on the other hand, has demonstrated a more optimistic picture in which growing economic interdependence and the commitments to international organisations will facilitate Chinese adherence to the rules which have governed the international system.

These rationalist approaches have had a strong influence on the studies of Chinese international relations and foreign policy. However, they have difficulty explaining those situations where China has chosen to assume certain international responsibilities in the absence of substantial material interest. These situations, as well as those situations that have been seemingly explained by rationalist and material approaches discussed above are better examined from an ideational perspective. Indeed, many Chinese scholars argue that “responsible power” is either an emerging or an already existent official national identity. This national identity as a responsible state in international society can redefine China’s national interests and make its foreign behaviour more consistent with the international normative standards. This new Chinese scholarship of national identity, nevertheless, does not provide any convincing empirical studies to bolster the hypothesis that “responsible power” is one facets of China’s official national identity. Also, the source of this national identity remains unclear. The state socialisation literature can shed some light on how the international norms and the expectations from the international community can influence state’s foreign behaviour.

What is lacking from this new scholarship on China’s pursuit of “responsible power” status is a theoretical attempt through a state socialisation approach to investigate and explain China’s interpretation of state responsibility and “responsible power,” and some comprehensive case-studies focusing on the dynamics of China’s socialisation into different international norms to fulfil its state responsibility in international community. Last but not the least, as a rising power China is not merely a passive actor or “rule-taker” in international stage. It has been increasingly proactive and initiative in global governance by trying to shape the evolution of international norm towards its preferred path. Although its influence often remains limited, China has shown the potential to play
more important roles in future norm-making. A study should provide the theoretical and empirical space to examine such interactions if they are present.
Table 1  Summary: contending theoretical perspectives on China’s attempt to be a “responsible power”

<table>
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<td>Western: “Responsible power” is either a political rhetoric or a pragmatic approach to enhance China’s national interest and counterbalance Western “constraint policies” towards China.</td>
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CHAPTER TWO

China as a “Responsible Power”: A State Socialisation Approach

Introduction
This chapter aims to establish a theoretical framework for the study. Instead of rationalist international relations theories, which focus on material incentives and presume that interests and identities are endogenous, this chapter argues for a social constructivist approach emphasizing the international norm of “responsible power” and its diffusion through state socialisation in international society. Since the end of WWII, the international standards of “responsible state” have been applied to decide whether a state is a “qualified” member in international society. This norm has framed a set of expectations which have been ascribed to by the major states on how a state should behave internally and externally.¹ Starting to actively participate in international affairs with its increased international presence since 1980s, China has been expected to be a responsible power and has been “learning” the changing standards of responsible power during the past thirty years. This chapter theoretically explains China’s attempts to be a responsible power and argues that this norm has been a causally significant factor in Chinese foreign policy and its compliance with various international regimes. Although different dimensions of the norm matter differently to China’s foreign policy, China has been internalising the norm when it socialises in international society.

This chapter first discusses the international norm of “responsible power” and its diffusion in international society through the efforts of norm entrepreneurs and state socialisation. It addresses the questions of why China has paid more attention to the international norm of “responsible power” since the 1980s, and how China has accessed the norm. Moreover, this chapter explores the localisation of international norm in order to explain why some dimensions/standards of “responsible power” matter more than others to China’s foreign behaviours and foreign policy.

Diffusion via Socialisation: China and the Idea of “Responsible Power”

As an alternative to materialist theories, social constructivism argues that the key concepts of international relations, such as national interest, sovereignty and anarchy, rest on the ideas that are “collectively held.” Therefore, the ideational factors, such as values, beliefs, knowledge, culture, expectations and interpretations, are essential topics for constructivists to consider international affairs. Those non-material factors in international relations are intersubjectively constructed in the processes of socialisation and internationalisation. Therefore, constructivism is a social theory and a theory of process. To provide insights on the processes of social construction, some scholars use international norm as a conceptual tool.

The term of “social/international norm” was not created by constructivist studies. It has been developed in sociology where organisation theory emphasises the importance of “institutions” (cultural norms and rules) in international life and demonstrates the social and cognitive features of those institutions. The study of international norms also has a deep history in international organisation and international political economy literature. The concept of regime argues that international norms are essential in setting state’s expectations and thus can largely influence state behaviour, especially in certain issue-areas, such as international trade and environmental issues. Enriched by those systemic theories constructivism defines an international norm as a prescriptive set of ideas about “appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity.” In other words, an international norm is a collective expectation and understanding that can make behavioural claims on actors. Motivated by this logic of appropriateness, actors who...
comply with certain international norms in world politics will justify and undertake actions that are considered appropriate for their identities. Besides the regulative function, an international norm can also shape and help constitute actors’ identities and interests as an explanatory and independent variable.\(^9\) In international politics, actors are guided by international norms which define their identities and offer them a range of acceptable “formal rules” and “accepted practices.”\(^10\) Therefore, for constructivists, agents and structures (such as international norms) are mutually constituted.\(^11\)

**The Idea of Responsible Power/State**

Although it is not explicitly written into a particular international legal document, the norm of “responsible power/state” has been largely spread and accepted in international community since WWII. Beyond the legalistic *erga omnes* quality of state responsibility, which focuses on the “legal consequences of breaches on international law that are attributable to an international actor,”\(^12\) the norm of responsible power has become an understanding and expectation of what a state “ought to do” towards both its citizens and other states in the world as a “moral agent” and qualified member of international society responding to ethical imperatives.\(^13\) Such a concept is difficult to empirically operationalise and initially studies were unsatisfactory. Early constructivist studies on international norms tended to treat norms as relatively static entities that always retain their original meaning once adopted.\(^14\) However, recent scholars have established dynamic models of norm development through the processes of norm diffusion and

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localisation.\textsuperscript{15} Such change is an important component of international norm research and theorising. As discussed in Chapter One, the international norm of responsible power has been changed since the 1950s through three phases and today the concept embraces wider ranges of meaning: it has transformed from a simple acknowledgement of the sovereign equality of states and the reciprocal obligations of non-intervention to prescribing compliance with international regimes in the 1980s to the promotion of good governance after the 1990s.\textsuperscript{16} At each developmental stage, the accepted collective meaning of the norm has been supported by different international laws and international organisations, such as the UN Charter, World Trade Organisation, World Bank and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

With its increasing involvement in international affairs and participation in international organisations, China has paid more attention to the norm of responsible power/state since the 1990s. In its official discourse, China mentioned its international responsibilities in various issue areas, such as disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and Asian Financial Crisis. However, China did not explicitly described itself as a “responsible power” in its White Paper on Foreign Affairs until 1999 when it stated that “Zhongguo zuowei yige heping, hezuo, fuzeren daguo de xingxiang riyi tuchu, guoji diwei he yingxiang jinyibu tigao” [China has demonstrated a clear and prominent image of a peace-loving, cooperative and responsible great power and enjoyed an enhanced international status and influence].\textsuperscript{17} The major powers in the world, such as the United States, Britain and European Union, have expressed their expectation that China comply with the norm of responsible power. For example in his 2005 remarks to National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, the former Deputy Secretary of State of the United States, Robert Zoellick encouraged China to become a “responsible stakeholder” and not to conduct foreign policy only for promoting its national interests, but also for “sustaining the international system” which contributes to states’ “peaceful prosperity.”\textsuperscript{18} Later in

\textsuperscript{15} About the literature of dynamic models of norm change, for example, see Wayne Sandholtz, “Dynamics of International Norm Change: Rules against Wartime Plunder,” \textit{European Journal of International Relations}, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2008), esp. pp. 103-110.
\textsuperscript{17} Zhongguo waijiao 中国外交 [China’s foreign affairs], ed. Department of Policy and Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affair, People’s Republic of China (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 1999), p. 4.
\textsuperscript{18} Robert B. Zoellick, “Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?” Remarks to National Committee on
2007, the United States more explicitly identified the matters which in its opinion China should make greater efforts to ameliorate to fulfil its duty as a “responsible power,” including North Korean nuclear issues, the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, international energy cooperation, global financial services and currency exchange rates. The Communication from the Commission of the Council and the European Parliament in 2006 suggested that the European Union and China “need to work together as they assume more active and responsible international roles, supporting and contributing to a strong and effective multilateral system.” Discussing global governance of climate change, Britain urged China to be a “more responsible power” by “taking up its global responsibilities, and engaging more constructively with the West.”

**Norm Diffusion Mechanism**

How did the idea of responsible power/state become an international norm? And how has the norm been spread to major states in international society, especially to China, a relatively new member state? Studies of norm diffusion or spread are concerned with the mechanism through which an idea is transmitted within the international system such that it achieves normative status and is accepted by most actors following the logic of appropriateness. Finnemore and Sikkink’s “life cycle” of international norm stands out by characterising the mechanism of norm diffusion into three stages, including norm emergence, norm “cascades” and norm internalisation. Not every emerging norm can complete and survive this cycle and become widely accepted by most international actors. There are two essential elements in this “life cycle” model: the efforts of norm entrepreneurs in promoting new norms and international socialisation which gives actors access to the norms.

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Norm Emergence and Norm Entrepreneurs

Norm diffusion is related to the efforts of norm entrepreneurs using various organisational platforms to convince a critical mass of states as norm leaders to embrace new norms. Sociological theory defines norm entrepreneurs as the principle agents of socialisation who are “certified and practising members of the group to which novices are being socialised.” Some realists believe that as the “leading states” in norm diffusion, different types of norm entrepreneurs can shape the evolution of international norms towards different directions. According to Yan, “tyrant states” practise the “power principle” and encourage other states to adopt the norm of power politics. On the other hand, “humane authority” states promote moral norms in international society. Falling into the middle ground, hegemonic states apply norms with “double standards” which employ moral norms towards allies and power norms towards enemies. Constructivists’ norm entrepreneurs are usually motivated by empathy for “another’s feelings or ideas,” altruism to “benefit another” and an ideational commitment to the belief and values embodied in the norms. Early studies of norm diffusion tend to emphasise nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and individuals as norm entrepreneurs and advocates. In previous empirical research, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) also served as “norm teachers.” These IGOs have created interest convergence among member states through institutional socialisation. Nevertheless, states and other international actors can also play important roles in norm diffusion. Powerful states with more communication resources sometimes enjoy advantages in creating and promoting new norms in international society.

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24 Ibid., pp. 895-896.
25 Long and Hadden, p. 44.
27 Ibid., p. 244.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p. 245.
30 Ibid., p. 898.
When they construct their frames, norm entrepreneurs are often in a “highly contested normative space” where alternative norms and frames can create alternative understanding and interpretation of appropriateness.\(^{35}\) On one hand, international norms built and reproduced by social action are based on the inter-subjective perception, which means that international practices acquire consistency and regularity.\(^{36}\) On the other hand, international norms also exist as subjective understandings and require agreement for their existence.\(^{37}\) The possible gap between “inter-subjective and subjective appraisals” of a norm, therefore, leads to opportunities for norm contestation.\(^{38}\)

Norm emergence and state socialisation afterwards often occur during critical historical periods, such as world wars and major economic downturns, when international changes and domestic crises coincide with each other.\(^{39}\) The norm entrepreneurs of “responsible power/state” can be traced back to the great powers (mainly the United States, the Great Britain and the Soviet Union) and their management of international order at the end of WWII.\(^{40}\) With their negotiations and agreements at the Cairo, Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam Conference in the 1940s, these great powers established a post-World War international society. To promote the norm or standard of a qualified and responsible member of this society, those norm entrepreneurs encouraged the development of the United Nations as the “organisational platform,” encouraging most states to join and comply with the UN Charter, which emphasises the sovereign equality of member states, peaceful settlement of international disputes, non-use of force and non-intervention of domestic affair.\(^{41}\) With the increasing trend of globalisation and state interdependency, the norm entrepreneurs of “responsible power/state” have been broadened to include the major international organisations established by those great powers under the goal of

\(^{35}\) Ibid.


\(^{38}\) Ibid., p. 325.


international peace and security.\textsuperscript{42} Those international organisations have attempted to engage states into their different specific agendas, such as world trade order, environmental protection, peacekeeping and human security. Those organisations, along with some state “entrepreneurs” have subsequently tried to socialise other states and “teach” them to have a “good standing in [the] international regime” and pay more attention to human rights issues and democracy in the past two decades.

Regaining its seat in the United Nations and the Security Council in 1971, China can still be considered a new member within international society. China’s socialisation in this society has not only offered it the access to the norm of “responsible power,” but also exposed it in many other antithetical or countervailing international norms. For example, when norm entrepreneurs discussed sovereign equality and pacific dispute solution, China also has learnt the principle of realpolitik from its experience in “Century of Humiliation” (1840-1949).\textsuperscript{43} Although it was encouraged to participate in humanitarian intervention and promote human rights and democracy, China has felt difficult to give up the norm of non-intervention and non-interference in domestic issues.

\textit{Norm “Cascades” and State Socialisation}

The studies of norm diffusion have led students of international relations to research into the area of socialisation which aims to explain how a norm rooted in one community can diffuse and be internalised by the actors outside the community. The concept of socialisation has held a pivotal role in social theories. From a sociological perspective, socialisation summarises “how and to what extent diverse individuals are meshed with the requirement of collective life” at the societal level.\textsuperscript{44} It mainly consists of the process of training and shaping new-comers by the group members and the social adjustment of novices to the normative framework and the logic of appropriateness.\textsuperscript{45} Similarly, social psychology defines socialisation as the process in which “social organisations influence

\textsuperscript{42} Foot, pp. 8-9.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
the action and experience of individuals."  

46 Inspired by sociology and psychology, political scientists consider socialisation to be the mechanism through which norm leaders/entrepreneurs persuade other actors to adhere to a particular prescriptive standard, 47 and the processes where intersubjective convergence takes place. 48 Socialisation attempts to create “membership in a society where the intersubjective understandings of the society become taken granted.” 49 From a system-centred approach, actors usually enter into a social interaction with different characteristics; but socialisation can reduce the variety of agents and encourage similarities of attributes and behaviour among them. 50

Realists and liberalists believe that socialisation can create and impose exogenous constraints on actors, and thus “limits and mold behaviour.” 51 They explain socialisation without reference to sociological or psychological theories of cognition and action. 52 Kenneth Waltz regards state competition along with socialisation as the major mechanisms through which the structure of the international system can condition the units within the system. 53 Rationalists argue that material incentives can largely determine the effectiveness of socialisation. For example, a hegemonic power can exercise economic or military incentives to socialise a secondary state by changing its cost-benefit calculation. 54 Under a rationalist assumption, the selfish and instrumental quality of state behaviour can be largely redirected and refracted in the international socialisation process. 55 Schimmelfennig develops a rational approach to state socialisation based on strategic calculation. He argues that socialisation is a process of exogenous reinforcement where the actors calculate the costs and benefits of compliance

54 Ikenberry and Kupchan.
and international organisations distribute rewards and punishments.\textsuperscript{56} Despite this emphasis on material factors, rationalist approaches to socialisation do not deny the importance of “substantive beliefs” in norm compliance. However, they believe that normative persuasion is not sufficient in itself to drive the process of state socialisation, and normative changes cannot take place without material motivations.\textsuperscript{57} According to rationalists, coercion, material incentives and persuasion are all very powerful mechanisms in state socialisation.\textsuperscript{58} Yet material incentives (for instance, membership conditionality to join an international organisation) are often much more effective along with normative methods (such as persuasion and social influence) in terms of pro-norm policy change, especially when strong domestic opposition to a particular policy exists.\textsuperscript{59} Therefore, socialisation enables rationalists to engage ideational factors into their systematic model “without compromising its materialist foundations.”\textsuperscript{60}

Unlike rationalist approach, the English School in International Relations emphasises the importance of international community, which is described as a “highly social setting.”\textsuperscript{61} It recognises the normative aspect of international relationships and socialising effects of international society.\textsuperscript{62} However, the English School conception of the normative aspect of international society serves more as a premise in the theory rather than as an explanatory factor. It does not provide any explanation about the actors, mechanisms or results of socialisation. Learning from English School, constructivists have added more value to the studies of state socialisation. They argue that during the process of socialisation, actors can alter their behaviour because of endogenous changes in their normative characteristics and identities caused solely by social factors.\textsuperscript{63} Instead

\textsuperscript{57} Ikenberry and Kupchan, pp. 290-292.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} Johnston, “Treating International Institutions as Social Environments,” p. 488.
of simply behaving in accordance with a material cost-benefit analysis, states can internalise norms arising elsewhere in international system during the process of socialisation. And the social approbation will encourage states at the “margins of cultural change” to embrace their new identities according to the norms. This is not automatic or self-evident process where a norm is seen as endemically desirable. Socialisation often proceeds in contested contexts where “one norm must compete with other norms and perceptions of interest,” and actors usually do not naturally comply with or internalise one particular norm without the efforts of both norm entrepreneurs and norm novices. Previous studies have outlined several micro-processes of socialisation. Norm entrepreneurs can change novices’ behaviour by the methods of persuasion and social influence, while norm novices can respond with normative change through the process of identification and mimicking. The social group they belong to is not merely a membership group that requires compliance with rules and norm, but also a “positive reference group” that encourages members to adopt group’s values and behave accordingly. This thesis examines how China’s socialisation in international society has offered it the opportunities to access the norm of “responsible power” and engage in various pro-group behaviours under the effect of normative persuasion, social influence, identification and mimicking mechanisms.

Persuasion

Influenced by Habermas’s theory of communicative actions, constructivists believe that the goals and orientations of actors are built upon the basis of a “shared definition”

65 Harrison, p. 528.
67 There are mainly two pieces of literature that have identified the micro-processes of state socialisation. Johnston believes they are mimicking, social influences and persuasion. See Alastair Iain Johnston, Social States: China in International Institution, 1980-2000 (Princeton, New Jersey; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008). Rublee uses the terms of persuasion, social conformity and identification. See Maria Rublee, Nonproliferation Norms: Why States Choose Nuclear Restraint (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009). According to those two authors’ definition, social influence and social conformity share the same meaning.
70 Trine Flockhart, “‘Masters and Novices’: Socialization and Social Learning through the NATO Parliamentary Assembly,” International Relations Vol. 18, No. 3, p. 364.
instead of simply the participants’ personal understanding.\textsuperscript{71} Therefore, communicative action (mainly speech) can persuade and shape an actor’s idea about what goals they should pursue and what identity they should hold in social life.\textsuperscript{72} As a micro-process of socialisation, persuasion can explain the change of actors’ behaviour in the absence of a material incentive and mental coercion. In this circumstance, norm novices are convinced through the “cognition that particular norms, values, and causal understandings are correct and ought to be operative in their own behaviour.”\textsuperscript{73} Norm entrepreneurs often make systematic efforts to “teach” the novice the value, belief or idea.\textsuperscript{74} Therefore, persuasion is the process by which “agent action becomes social structure, ideas become norms, and the subjective becomes the intersubjective.”\textsuperscript{75} It can be characterised from novice’s side as “Now I believe that X is better than Y. I should do X because it is good and I am supposed to do so.” Socialisation through normative persuasion is the case of “beliefs before acts” when a novice first accepts the values and norms held by norm entrepreneurs and then changes its policy to accommodate the norms already accepted.\textsuperscript{76}

Norm entrepreneurs often attempt to construct an appealing cognitive frame in order to persuade the novice states. They tend to use language that can “name, interpret and dramatise” the issues related to the emerging norm, and they complete their frames with the alternatives.\textsuperscript{77} As a main persuasive device, “framing” can provide a singular interpretation and appropriate behavioural response for a particular situation.\textsuperscript{78} Thus, constructivists have studied frames to discover the causal relationship of social norms on state behaviour and policy.\textsuperscript{79} Cognitive consistency theory found in psychology has suggested the mechanism of “analogy,” which indicates that actors are more likely to accept the new ideas that share some similarities to the extant belief or ideas that they

\textsuperscript{72} Finnemore and Sikkink, “Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics,” p. 402.
\textsuperscript{73} Johnston, Social States: China in International Institution, 1980-2000, p.25.
\textsuperscript{75} Finnemore and Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” p. 914.
\textsuperscript{76} Ikenberry and Kapchan, p. 290.
\textsuperscript{77} Finnemore and Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” p. 897.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., p. 43.
have already accepted. Based on this understanding, norm entrepreneurs usually frame issues in the way that can associate and resonate with the shared value of the targeted novices.

Social Influence

Socialisation sometimes demands that individual actors should comply with organisational norms by changing their interests or preferences (persuasion). However, socialisation can also emanate actors’ pro-norm behaviour through a cost-benefit calculation made with social rewards and punishments (social influence). Social influence is based on an actor’s desire to maximise status, honour and prestige in the community to which it wants to belong. The rewards of social influence can be psychological well-being, good reputation and status, and a sense of belonging to and being recognised by a particular community. Punishment, on the other hand, may include a loss of prestige, shaming, humiliation and other social sanctions. The process of socialisation through social influence, however, is not unproblematic for the generation of norms. This micro-process of socialisation can produce social pressure and lead to an actor’s “public conformity without private acceptance” of norms. It can cause novice’s behavioural change but not generate any profound change in its preference. Thus, social influence can be characterised as “I think Y is better than X (or I think Y is correct instead of X), but everyone else says X, and I do not want to rock the boat. So I will just do X.”

Norm leaders and the community use the mechanism of back-patting and opprobrium to distribute the social reward and punishment among the novices. Back-patting is characterised as “recognition, praise and normative support” offered for a novice.
member’s cooperative and pro-norm behaviour.\textsuperscript{88} Moreover, the benefits increase when the number of cooperative group members grows.\textsuperscript{89} Opprobrium associated with status denial and identity rejection can create social and psychological costs for novice states.\textsuperscript{90} Opprobrium also grows in intensity with the number of co-operators.\textsuperscript{91} A larger community can often create more criticism towards rule-breakers, and thus greatly increase the cost of disobedience. Hence, the number of participants is essential for an emerging international norm to survive the norm “life cycle.” Finnemore and Sikkink have suggested that there should be at least one third of the total states in the society to adopt a particular norm before it becomes more widely accepted.\textsuperscript{92}

Identification

While being in a normative environment, novice actors can respond to persuasion and social influence positively through the processes of identification and mimicking. Social psychology indicates that identification is the dynamic of interpersonal social influence.\textsuperscript{93} When one actor accepts persuasion or social influence based on its desire to build or maintain a “satisfying self-defining relationship” to another actor, the mechanism of identification starts to work.\textsuperscript{94} According to Social Identity Theory, the conceptualisation of who constitutes the “other” and “significant we” can greatly determine the outcome of the socialisation process.\textsuperscript{95} Specifically, identification occurs when one actor wants to be like another and takes action to that end.\textsuperscript{96} This transformation of an interpersonal relationship to obtain similarity between “self” and “significant we” can lead to the change of actor’s preference structure, and further change its behaviour. Identification is more than an interaction between individuals, but is often discussed in the context of

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 503.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., p. 504
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{92} Finnemore and Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” p. 901.
\textsuperscript{93} Gold and Douvan, p. 169.
\textsuperscript{96} Rublee, p. 18.
group membership, i.e. “intra-group identification.”97 This kind of identification among a social group can generate the “logic of obligatory” behaviour, where individuals make decisions by attempting to match their perceptions of “who they are” (social identities) with the expectation of the normative context of the group members as a whole.98 Therefore, identification can be characterised as “I will do X even though I may be used to do Y, because either the actor I admire does X and I just want to be like him/her, or the group I belong to does X and I want to be a qualified member of the group.” If the actor intends to be considered a member of a prestigious group with certain positive values attached to it (“significant we”), the actor is more likely to adopt the norms or values of this target group.99 In sum, identification to a reference group can create cognitive and social pressure to conform, and thus lead to acculturation that the novice actor adopts the “belief and behavioural patterns of the surrounding culture.”100

Mimicking

In socialisation, a novice may copy the behavioural norms of the group and attempt to act like the other members. This micro-process of socialisation, where one actor “borrows” other actor’s behaviour and creates more of congruence with the normative environment is “mimicking” or cognitive role playing.101 There are two explanations for this mechanism. First, when a new actor initially gains entry to a community, this new actor initially tends to mimic the pro-social behaviour of the community in order to survive the novel and uncertain social environment.102 This mechanism happens even before the novice can get more access to social persuasion, or before the actor can do any detailed reward-punishment calculation.103 Based on this interpretation, mimicking can be characterised as “everyone in this group does X; since I am a new member, it would be

99 Flockhart, p. 600.
103 Ibid., p. 23.
better to do X instead of Y to survive.” Second, mimicking can be also derived from persuasion and social influence that helps the actor to decide which reference group is worth mimicking. After it identifies the admired entity, the actor is very likely to mimic the “role model’s” behaviour or copy the behavioural norms to obtain a satisfying relationship with the “significant other” or the community. Hence, mimicking can be understood as “everyone in this group does X, so I will do X too.”

**China’s Socialisation**

To analyse the presence and the influence of socialisation processes on China’s acceptance of the norm of responsible power, this study (see Table 2) observes both the norm leaders/entrepreneurs (major states and international organisations) and norm novice (China). First, the thesis will examine the various norm leaders’ communication related to how they have tried to convince China to pursue a “responsible power” identity in international society based on the “logic of appropriateness.” Sources, such as official news releases, policy statements, speeches, and other governmental documents, will be cited to support those norm leaders’ persuasion attempts. Second, this study will investigate the social rewards and punishments that the norm leaders of “responsible power” have exerted on China. As part of this investigation, it will demonstrate various norm leaders’ strategies of back-patting (recognition, praise and normative support) and opprobrium (criticism, denial of status and rejection of identity) as they attempt to socialise China into the normative society of “responsible state.” Third, China’s changing self-perception in the social environment will be discussed in order to show how the identification process has contributed to the diffusion of the norm of “responsible power.” Fourth, the thesis will review China’s mimicking behaviour when it attempts to assume the role of “responsible power” and discuss how this mimicking assists in norm diffusion and internalisation. By eliminating any possible material motivation and domestic pressure to explain its behaviours and based on the studies of those micro-processes of socialisation outlined above, this thesis will attribute China’s behaviour and preference changes about being a “responsible power” mainly to normative considerations and an

104 Ibid., p. 24.
analysis of its social cost-benefits within international society.

Table 2  China’s socialisation and the diffusion of the norm of responsible power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro-processes of socialisation</th>
<th>International society</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion</td>
<td>Communicative action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social influence</td>
<td>Social rewards: back-patting Social punishment: opprobrium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Self-perception of its role and status in the world</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimicking</td>
<td>“Borrowing” and “copying” behaviours in foreign policy</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Internalisation and Localisation: China’s Adaptation of the International Norm of Responsible Power

From socio-structural perspective, actors start the processes of socialisation in international society as different individuals; however, shared ideas, understandings, and beliefs within the society can generate “uniform behavioural claims” upon those actors and create certain similar preferences and interests among them. Numerous studies of norm diffusion and state socialisation have successfully explained how a state can get access to an international norm and has been convinced to change its behaviour out of normative considerations. Nevertheless these studies inadequately explain why some international norms and transnational ideas are more likely to be accepted by one actor than another; and how domestic actors comply with an international norm by interpreting and manipulating the external ideas according to local practices. Recently, some scholars in international relations, international law and public policy have become increasingly interested in the idea of a “culture match” or a “domestic resonance” that an international norm may have with domestic norms to explain norm variations when the norm is spread

and implanted into domestic policies. They have focused on a “domestic filter” through which international norms exert their influence within the domestic environment and produce the variations in interpretation and conformity of incorporated norm. Norm localisation has provided insights into the study of norm diffusion and internalisation in a particular locale from an agent-oriented perspective. This section aims to establish a framework to discuss the complex processes of China’s reinterpretation and reconstitution in making the responsible power norm congruent with its extant local normative context.

**Norm Localisation: Domestic Salience of International Norm**

In order to depict and explain norm diffusion, an agent-oriented approach looks beyond the transnational actors and international prescriptions. It emphasises the variables in domestic political arena. There are three main factors that can contribute to the domestic salience of an international norm. First, as the norm takers, domestic actors can decide whether and to what extent an international norm can enter the domestic agenda and how it will be implemented in policy making. Second, the various cultural, political and institutional strategies of domestic actors can influence the effectiveness of norm empowerment. Political rhetoric and political institutions are usually used and created to promote the norm domestically. Third, the characteristics of the international norm can also impact the likelihood that the norm will be accepted by domestic actors. A “cultural match” between international norm and local value can facilitate norm diffusion to domestic level.

**Domestic Actors**

The domestic actors in norm localisation include national and sub-national political

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elites, domestic interest groups and social movements from civil society. These actors tend to favour an international norm that can justify their political and social programs and promote their interests in domestic policy debates.\textsuperscript{108} By advocating the existence and adoption of an international norm, domestic actors attempt to enhance their legitimacy and authority of their current policy or institution.\textsuperscript{109} Political elites can strengthen the state legitimacy by complying with an international norm in their policy making and consequently obtain international approval with reputation, trust and credibility as social benefits in the international community.\textsuperscript{110} And this international legitimation can contribute to a government’s domestic legitimation and its ability to rule and stay in power.\textsuperscript{111} Constructivists would expect states which are unconfident in their international status and reputation in an era of changing and reform, to comply with international norms more eagerly.\textsuperscript{112} To facilitate state compliance some authors argue that state socialisation with an international norm cannot succeed without the consent of the majority of the important political and societal actors toward the norm.\textsuperscript{113} Like state actors, individuals, domestic non-governmental organisations and others interest groups advocate an international norm and build their authority upon it to support their particular normative commitments. In addition, role theory indicates that socialisation occurs in the context of role relationships between different actors.\textsuperscript{114} The normative actors’ sense of identity of “being unique” or “belonging to a community” conditions the process of norm localisation as well.\textsuperscript{115}

\textbf{Political Rhetoric and Domestic Institutions}

Political rhetoric is often applied to cultivate a collective understanding and establish the domestic salience of an international norm. According to Speech Act Theory, many

\textsuperscript{110} Finnemore and Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” p. 903.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Finnemore and Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” p. 906.
\textsuperscript{114} Thies, p. 694.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., p. 249. Acharya mainly addresses that the sense of “being unique” in terms of actors’ value and interaction can facilitate localisation.
utterances can be equivalent to actions; and saying certain words can effectively serve to perform a social act.\textsuperscript{116} Both state and societal leaders can make the performative speech act of an international norm work and raise its importance in a national context by repeated declarations on the legitimacy and obligations brought by the norm.\textsuperscript{117} Moreover, domestic actors can also develop or modify political institutions to incorporate an international norm into the domestic bureaucratic or legal system.\textsuperscript{118} These institutions provide rules for domestic actors and articulate their rights and obligations, which transforms the international norm’s legitimacy and authority into local practices. By fostering “habitual compliance” in the process of norm internationalisation, domestic institutions can make conformance with the norm automatic and show norm’s quality of “taken-for-granted.”\textsuperscript{119}

\textit{Cultural Match}

Sociologists studying the diffusion of a social practice believe that the cultural match between the practice and the adopter can largely influence the pattern of diffusion.\textsuperscript{120} They suggest that norm diffusion is more likely to be successful if the norm is congruent with the prior values and practices of the norm-taker.\textsuperscript{121} Based on this theory, agent-oriented norm studies have emphasised the cultural match between international norms and local norms and how this contributes to norm diffusion and localisation. From this perspective successful norm localisation also depends on the quality and characteristic of the norm \textit{per se}. As such, norm diffusion tends to be more efficient when there is a high degree of cultural match such that the global norm resonates with the target country’s domestic values, beliefs or understandings, which in turn can be reflected in national discourse, as well as the legal and bureaucratic system.\textsuperscript{122} This cultural match

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., p. 79.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., pp. 80-81; also see Finnemore and Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” pp. 904-905
\textsuperscript{121} Acharya, “Asian Regional Institutions and the Possibilities for Socializing the Behavior of States,” p. 14.
\textsuperscript{122} Jeffrey T. Checkel, “Norms, Institutions, and National Identity in Contemporary Europe,” \textit{International Studies}
can also be rooted in the prior national experiences. With such cultural consistency, domestic actors are more likely to accept an international norm and treat it as a given or as “matter-of-fact.” Johnston’s “strategic culture” suggests that different domestic norms concerning the role and efficacy of military force can generate different strategic preferences or behaviours even though the structural condition remains the same. These domestic norms and values (strategic culture) can simplify reality and privilege or define preferences, and thus narrow the range of foreign behaviours. If a state’s domestically embedded value resonates with the international norms (“cultural match”), it will be much easier to socialise this particular state into the normative society. Hence, cultural match in norm localisation explains why identical or similar international socialisation processes can lead to quite different local developments and variations of international norms.

In order to create or highlight the cultural match, both international and domestic norm promoters often use the strategies of “framing” and “grafting,” either to build linkages between an international norm and pre-existing domestic norms or associate the international norm with a domestic norm in the same issue area. In some extreme cases, the norm entrepreneurs even attempt to change the local culture of norm recipient to create a better cultural match for norm localisation. For example, when it tried to socialise India into its colonial system in the early of 19th century, Britain successfully shaped the evolution of Indian political culture by adding British value and practices into India’s social, political and judicial system.

**Norm Diffusion and Domestic Structure**

Domestic structures, as reflected in state-society nexus, can diversify the mechanisms of norm diffusion and make possible local variations of an international norm. In some
ways the domestic structure is a prior variable to consider in the diffusion of international norms. The other domestic factors, including domestic actors, political rhetoric and cultural match, can only influence the processes and results of norm localisation based on the specific domestic structure of the state. The state-society relationship as an intervening variable can largely determine the role of societal pressure and elite learning in norm localisation in different countries.  

Checkel has identified four domestic structure models in his study of norm diffusion mechanisms. At one end of the spectrum he locates a liberal structure where individuals and social groups play majors roles in a bottom-up styled policy-making due to open regulatory or legislative procedures. This type of environment significantly restricts the role of political elites. Where this type of domestic structure is present, societal pressure can largely explain the norm internalisation. At the other end of the spectrum, a “state-above-society” structure offers the political elites greater control over society and privileges a top-down policy-making system. In this case, elite learning is essential for norm localisation. Some scholars have pointed out that political elites are more easily persuaded by the “latest intellectual fad”; while the public opinion, rooted in local value and belief, tends to be more stable. Under this structure, an international norm is more likely to affect domestic policy when the authoritative officials are exposed into the normative environment. Between these two extremes Checkel identifies a middle of the range of domestic structures which can influence norm localisation: a corporatist structure placing the societal pressure occupied the primary position in local empowerment of an international norm, and elite learning as secondary; and a statist structure which emphasises the dominant role of elite decision makers yet acknowledges the impact of societal actors as subordinate domestic players in norm diffusion.

133 Cortell and Davis, “How Do International Institutions Matter?” p.455.  
“China’s Model” and Observing Norm Localisation

Since the 1978 Opening Up, China’s domestic structure has experienced significant changes including devolution of power to local governments, the improved bureaucratic and legal systems and the concomitant development of various societal interest groups. Several major trends in China’s policy-making have been discovered: a higher level of specialised knowledge among elites, the proliferation of institutions, groups and individuals in policy-making, the gradual decentralisation of power, and increasing degree of globalisation. Nevertheless, the state still exercises considerable control over society; and the political elites continue to dominate policy-making, especially foreign policy-making. As such, the learning of an international norm by elite decision makers is an essential process for the global norm to reach the China’s domestic agenda. Second, China’s public opinion, interest groups and large corporations can more or less influence norm localisation in China by supporting or resisting the norm. However, the likelihood of societal pressure in norm localisation is limited in China since the societal penetration of government policy-making is weak. Lastly, China’s foreign policy tradition and cultural values tend to shape and condition norm diffusion, and provide the global norm certain “Chinese characteristics.”

Figure 1 demonstrates how the international norm of responsible power diffuses and localises in China based on a “top-down” model in which state plays the essential role in the process. China has accessed the norm of responsible power in state socialisation through an “elite learning” mechanism where Chinese political elites have been demonstrated the importance of the norm by other leading states and organisations in international society. Meanwhile, some leaders of domestic social groups have also been familiar with the norm of responsible power. State elites in a “state-above-society” domestic structure obviously have more power and resources to influence the

137 Ibid.
138 Flockhart has created a “complex socialisation” model with top-down and bottom-up modes to explain norm diffusion in both international level and domestic level. See Flockhart, “‘Complex Socialization’: A Framework for the Study of State Socialization,” esp. pp. 101-102.
policy-making compared with societal actors, and thus contribute more to norm
localisation by exploiting political rhetoric and establishing political institutions. In the
meantime, the cultural match between the international norm of responsible power
(including different aspects of the norm) and China’s traditional culture, values and
beliefs, foreign policy practices, and its self-perception has generated the variation of the
norm which can be reflected in China’s dissimilar attitude towards different aspects of the
norm. Finally, China shows its compliance with the international norm of responsible
power through behavioural changes in its foreign relations, as well as its domestic policy.

The model depicted in Figure 1 provides insights into the processes of norm
localisation of responsible power in China, and indicates China’s policy and behavioural
changes in the framework of the international norm. Defining China’s domestic structure
as “state-above-society” according to Checkel’s models, this study treats China as a
relatively monolithic actor in terms of its foreign relations. It mainly observes China’s
official stand in the norm localisation process. It does not necessarily mean that societal
actors are unimportant. However, compared to the Chinese government’s dominant role,
the societal actors cannot exert as much influence as the state actors on internalising an
international norm to a local practice. There are three ways to observe and investigate the
domestic salience of the norm of responsible power in China. First, an international
norm’s domestic effect is initially signalled in its national political discourse. In a
“state-above-society” model, this study expects an introduction of responsible power
norm into political discourse mainly by state elites. Those state leaders also demand a
change in the foreign policy agenda according to the norm, and build various government
working groups/committees to formulate and implement a specific policy reflective of the
norm. Second, the establishment of domestic institutions is another indication of a
successful norm localisation. This thesis anticipates the construction of new policy
instruments and institutions to implement the norm of responsible power. These
instruments and institutions will further provide an impetus for additional policy changes
supportive of the responsible power norm. Also, the study examines whether there are any

139 Cortell and Davis, “Understanding the Domestic Impact of International Norms,” p. 70.
140 Ibid.
elements of the responsible state norm that have become embedded in China’s domestic legal system. Third, this study hypothesises that if the international norm of responsible power has largely motivated China’s foreign behaviours, there should be a high degree of consistency across related issues areas.\textsuperscript{141}

\textbf{Figure 1}  Norm localisation of responsible power in China

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{norm_localisation}
\caption{Norm localisation of responsible power in China}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Who Socialises Whom: Socialisation as a “Two-way Path”}

Previous constructivist studies on state socialisation have mainly focused on how international institutions and norms affect state behaviours, especially when the state is a new-comer to the normative society. They have demonstrated the assimilation process of a novice state into a normative group by observing state’s acceptance and internationalisation of social norms. However, the potential that a new-comer can somehow influence the group during socialisation process cannot be neglected. Sociology

\textsuperscript{141} Cortell and Davis, “Understanding the Domestic Impact of International Norms,” p. 71.
and social psychology literature has widely conceptualised socialisation as a “two-way path” and indicated the “mutual influence” of attitudes and behaviours between novice and the group.\(^\text{142}\) The role of novices in a social group can sometimes be a “relatively passive receptacle of group culture”; whereas another novice may be “an active participant in shaping their own learning and development.”\(^\text{143}\) Those novices are not only assimilated into the group, but also successfully exert some influence on other group members and affect intra-group relations.\(^\text{144}\) As such, the novices can be both targets of socialisation and active agents who can shape the content and outcome of socialisation process.\(^\text{145}\) The influence from the novices can create normative contestation and thus influence the evolution of social norms.\(^\text{146}\) Recent constructivist studies of international relations have paid increasing attention to how novice states can influence the international society and shape the international norm during socialisation process. Those theoretical discussions bolstered by some empirical studies have shed new light on the topic of China’s state socialisation and its quest of “responsible power” status.

First, previous research has suggested that a powerful socialiser/ norm entrepreneur can largely contribute to the successful socialisation. For example, Schimmelfennig pointed out that the asymmetry power relations between Western and Eastern Europe is the precondition of “teaching and learning” process where the West can utilise its advantage in both material and social resources to reinforce its socialisation efforts.\(^\text{147}\) Nevertheless, as a powerful and influential state in international system, China’s state socialisation can hardly be evaluated through this one-directional approach. Considering China’s socialisation into the international norm of “responsible state” from the “two-way path” emphasises both the norm diffusion to China and China’s influence on the evolution of international norm. Some scholars have already conducted empirical studies to

\(^\text{143}\) Long and Hadden, p. 46.
demonstrate the “mutually constitutive” relationship between China and the norm socialisers. Under the theoretical framework of complex engagement, Ba reveals that on one hand, China has been socialised to the “ASEAN Way” through “social learning”; on the other hand, China has also changed the context of interactions with ASEAN during the socialisation process.  

Johnston focuses on China’s relations with ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and suggests that there exists a “feedback and response” process between China and ARF which result in the institutional change in ARF. Prantl and Nakano concentrate on the norm localisation of “responsibility to protect” in China. They have identified a norm diffusion loop though which both China and the normative community can obtain feedback from each other, influencing the idea of “responsibility to protect” according to the difference between “the actual and the desired output.” This new scholarship has showed that China is not merely a passive norm recipient and follower.

Second, as an emerging state in international system, China holds a unique position in norm diffusion and localisation. A novice state tends to identify itself with the reference group and mimic the other members’ behaviours. China has tried to integrate into the existing norms structure to be considered a “qualified member” of the international society. Nevertheless, emerging powers, like China, also attempt to “shape the further evolution of international norm.” Pu summarises that an emerging power can behave as a norm-shaper by challenging the purported superiority of Western values and ideas in norm-making, emphasising state sovereignty in humanitarian actions, using multilateral forum to influence norm evolution and contributing to norm-making process in international society. Depicting socialisation as a “two-way” process, Pu has demonstrated the significance of emerging power (a novice state) in norm construction and diffusion. Pu applies this conceptual framework into China’s state socialisation and provides several convincing examples from China’s foreign relations which can serve as a

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151 Pu, p. 357.
152 Ibid., pp. 357-359.
preliminary research for future in-depth case-studies.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered a theoretical background to study China’s attempt to be a responsible power in international society from a social constructivist perspective. It has investigated the norm diffusion and localisation of responsible power in China at both international and national levels. The first section has employs a systemic approach to explain how China accesses the international norm of responsible power and why China would consider any behavioural changes to comply with the norm. It argues that China has been familiar with the norm of responsible power in the micro-processes of state socialisation where the norm entrepreneurs (leading countries and international organisations) tried to “teach” China the norm using persuasion and social influence, and that China as the norm novice has gradually accepted the norm by identification and mimicking. The second section adopted an agent-oriented approach to focus on the norm internalisation and localisation after the norm has diffused to China. It notes that based on a domestic structure of “state-above-society,” China’s political elite has played a dominant role in the process norm localisation of responsible power. The influence of societal actors in China’s policy-making, especially foreign policy decisions, exists but is considerably constrained. China’s political, cultural, and traditional values and beliefs can either facilitate or resist the diffusion of different aspects of the norm though a positive or negative “cultural match.” The third section argues that socialisation process is a “two-way path” and discusses a state’s active role in shaping the evolution of international norms. As “novice” but powerful state in international society, China is not merely a passive norm recipient, but also has responded the normative community by trying to influence the norm development toward its favoured normative direction.
CHAPTER THREE

China as a “Responsible Power”: A Chinese Official Interpretation

Introduction

This chapter discusses China’s official discourse of its responsibility as a “responsible power” in international society through both content analysis and discourse analysis. It aims to reveal how Chinese government understands the concept of state’s responsibility during different time periods and how it promotes China’s international image of a “responsible power.” It argues that the understanding and interpretation of China’s state responsibility has evolved and broadened to include a wider range of components since 1978 when China initiated its Reforming and Opening project. In addition, despite some ambiguity in the discourse, China’s interpretation of responsibility in its bilateral relations, multilateral relations and global governance has been moving increasingly closer to the concepts of state responsibility articulated by some western scholars as an essential component of “responsible power.”

This chapter includes two sections. The first section focuses on China’s evolving understanding of “responsibility” as a “responsible power” based on a content analysis. As a “problem-driven” content analysis, it starts from a research question and proceeds within a theoretical model to find the answer from a choice of suitable texts.1 This section first introduces a theoretical model which identifies three phases of the changing standards of being a responsible power in international society and explains why and how this model can be applied into this content analysis. Second, this section reviews the code book used in the analysis, emphasising on the sampling, validity and reliability of this research. Third, this study demonstrates China’s changing official discourses of its international responsibility in the past thirty years and reveals its general trend which is compared to the evolving international standards of “responsible power” in order to discover whether there is any consistency between them.

The second section conducts a discourse analysis on China’s official statements of state’s responsibility and “responsible power.” It examines the discourses of responsibility based on China’s foreign relations at different levels and in different issue areas, including China’s bilateral relations with major powers in the world, China’s participation in regional issues and international organisations, and China’s involvement in global governance. Finally, this section concludes by making an assessment on China’s official discourses of its international obligations and duties in its attempts to achieve a “responsible power” status in international community.

Evolving or Elusive: A Content Analysis of China’s Responsibility

*Theoretical Model*

Like many other quantitative studies, content analysis is established on theory and rationale which largely determine what content will be examined, what variables will be used in the study and what key words will be selected.² In order to measure China’s discourse of its international responsibility and China’s “responsible power” identity, this study builds a theoretical model referring to the definition of “responsible power.” As discussed in the first chapter, there is not a clear or standard definition for “state’s responsibility” and “responsible power” in either the academia of international relations or the realm of world politics. Scholars of international law argue that the rule of state responsibility requires states’ fulfilment of its international legal obligation and is reflected on states’ insistence on “normal standards of international conducts.”³ Nevertheless, considering the power-responsibility nexus, most political scientists tend to discuss state’s responsibility, especially the responsibilities of great powers beyond the definition drawn by international law.

Among those theoretical attempts to understand states’ responsibility, the definition of responsible power offered by Rosemary Foot is well-developed and comprehensive. It is most frequently cited by other scholars who study China’s discourse of responsible power from both China and western countries despite of their various approaches and

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² Neuendorf, p. 50.
different research findings. Foot discusses the concept of responsible power through a three-phase division and demonstrates the evolution of the international standards of responsible power.\textsuperscript{4} This content analysis examines China’s official discourse according to Foot’s definition. In order to select key words, this study details Foot’s three-phase criteria of a responsible power into several specific standards in each time period.

Phase One (1940s-1980s):

According to Foot’s definition, the international standards of responsible state in Phase One prevailed from the end of the Second World War till the 1980s. During this time period, responsible power status in international society was established based on state’s compliance and promotion of the international norms of non-intervention which can be specified as follow:\textsuperscript{5}

- The sovereign equality of states;
- The norm of non-interference in domestic affairs;
- The pacific settlement of disputes and the non-use of force except for purposes of self-defence.

Phase Two (1980s-1990s):

The 1980s saw the emergence of many international organisations, which built new standards and offered new meanings for a responsible power in international society. In this phase, those states which actively participated into international organisations and complied with international regimes were considered as responsible states.\textsuperscript{6} Under this standard, a responsible power should:

- Participate in international regimes and organisations that contribute to the core international society goal of international peace and security; and
- Be involved in arms control arrangements, UN peacekeeping operations, the protection of environment, and supportive of the world trade order.\textsuperscript{7}

Phase Three (1990s-Present):

After the Cold War, international society has paid more attention to state’s

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 9.
responsibility to offer global common goods and to promote the value of human rights and democracy. This phase resonates with a diffusion wave of national human rights institutions to many “loosely democratic constitutional regimes” throughout Latin America, Africa, Asia-Pacific and East Europe since the middle of the 1980s. In post-Cold War era, a responsible power should be a “solidarist” state with these new characteristics:

- Offering global common goods as an influential state in world affairs;
- Advocating global common values of human rights and democracy.

**Coding Scheme and Methodology**

In content analysis, coding scheme guides the process of coding by providing the principles, such as which content should be under survey, which words or terms should be coded and what statistical approach the researchers should take. Since the process of selecting key words from the target articles is more or less subjective, a reasonable coding scheme is necessary. By emphasising its sampling method, reliability and validity, this study will first introduce the code book within which all viable measures are explained.

This thesis selects a Chinese official national news magazine-*Beijing Review* as the target of the content analysis. Using a semantical content analysis, this study provides the frequency with which certain characterisations of China’s “responsible power” discourse are referred to. This system approach in content analysis aims to reveal trends in communication content which reflect the changing attitudes, interests and values of the population group, and to offer an extrapolation of trends.

**Reliability**

Reliability of quantitative research refers to the extent to which a measuring procedure can lead to the same result if the procedure is conducted at different time or by different researchers. A content analysis could not be valuable if the result of measuring

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9 Ibid., p.2.
10 Krippendorff, pp. 45-49.
11 Neuendorf, p. 112.
can only be obtained in one trial or by some particular students. In order to increase the reliability of content analysis, the researcher should manifest the key words under the survey; and each term should be clearly defined in a content analysis protocol and thus easy to be identified and counted.¹²

**Content Analysis Protocol:** Since the research focuses on China’s official discourse of its “international responsibility” as a “responsible power” in international society, the author codes only articles that have either the titles about China’s foreign policy or at least one paragraph related to China’s foreign relations. Most of the other articles, including China’s domestic issues, and the external and internal issues of other countries with no indication to China’s international relations are neither reviewed nor coded. However, there is one exception about sample selection. These are that China’s official discourses about promoting human rights and democratic governance have been coded from the texts associated with both China’s domestic politics and international relations.

This study aims to calculate the frequency of China’s different interpretation of responsibility from 1978 to 2010. It selects China’s discourse of responsibility and its projected national identity of a responsible power from those sentences in a language which is “prescriptive but not evaluative and in this sense is normative.”¹³ Those selected China’s perceptions towards itself are usually simply declared “without serious attempts to prove that is in fact so.”¹⁴ Based on the Foot’s model of the three phases of being a responsible power, this study has selected the following words, terms, and phrases as the key words; and every time any one of them appears in either the title or the content of the article, it is counted once. The study measures the frequency and frequency rate of each phase in each year.

**Phase One: China’s promotion of the norm of non-intervention**

- Peace-loving, maintaining stability, friendship and partnership
- State’s independence, equality, sovereignty, non-alignment and non-interference
- Anti-hegemonism, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism

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¹² Riffe, p. 107.
¹⁴ Ibid.
Phase Two: China’s participation in international regimes

- Participation in international organisations, regimes and community
- Compliance with international law and norm of peace and security
- Cooperative state

Phase Three: China’s obligations in global issues

- The active role in international society, an influential state and great-power status
- Shouldering international responsibility in foreign relations and global governance
- Promoting human rights and democracy

Even though it is guided by the code book with all key words listed, human coding process is subjective, which may sometimes undermine its reliability. However, compared with computer coding, human coding is more flexible, and thus it can cover more information than a computer does. Human coders can select the words and phrases that are not exactly the same ones on the code book but carry the similar meaning; while a computer can only highlight the designed key words without any variation. For example, “China is a peace-loving country,” “Chinese people love peace,” and “China pursues a peaceful foreign policy” have the similar indication that China tries to establish an identity of a peaceful power. If computer coding is applied, the key word “peace-loving” could be too narrow, while the word “peace” could be too broad.

Moreover, human coding can eliminate the content in which there are words or phrases the same as the key words in the code book, but with no implication to the same meaning. For instance, the code book emphasises the word “responsibility” and “responsible.” Computer coding will select those words with no discrimination. However, human coding will exclude those discourses of China’s “responsibility,” such as “the deterioration of the bilateral relationship is completely the responsibility of the United States” or “China is not responsible for …” Therefore, human coding is more suitable than computer coding in this study of China’s official discourses.

Human coding usually requires at least two coders to conduct the content analysis independently referring to the same code book to establish inter-coder reliability. After measuring the agreement index between the two coders, researchers can decide whether the content analysis is reliable. Usually, at least 10% overlap for the reliability test is
required. However, this study mainly engages one coder since it is a sole-authored research as a part of a doctoral project and has been granted limited funds to employ another one or more coders. Nevertheless, this study attempts to enhance its reliability by several ways. First, in most of content analysis, the selected samples take 5% to 7% of the whole sample pool. Sometimes, researchers increase the percentage to 10% to 20% in order to obtain a more reliable statistic result. This study, however, surveyed 33.3% samples in order to provide a statistically more robust result. Moreover, the author has taken all necessary coder’s training which familiarises herself with the coding protocol and conducted a pilot reliability test in the process of designing and modifying the key words.

Validity

Validity is the quality of the research results that can convince the readers to accept the result as true. Internal validity in content analysis is related to the research design governing data collection and how this design can strengthen the causal inference. There are mainly two techniques that can facilitate the establishment of a valid quantitative research design.

First, a theoretical or hypothesised model which can be empirically tested is required. This content analysis applies Foot’s “three-phase” approach of being a responsible power and tests it for the first time in an empirical study of surveying China’s official discourse of “responsible power.” If Foot’s theory cannot explain the patterns in sample content, the result of the content analysis will lead scholars to a better model. Second, based on the logic of design, the researchers should consider the time element into the design. The data on the presumed cause should be “collected and measured before the content it presumably influences,” which can strengthen the causal relationship. This chapter aims to discuss China’s interpretation of “responsible power”

15 Neuendorf, p. 51.
16 Riffe, p. 123.
17 Krippendorff, p. 313.
18 Riffe, p. 137.
19 Riffe, pp. 138-139.
20 Riffe, p. 139.
through the lens of its foreign relations. China’s Reforming and Opening Up starting from 1978 has largely changed its foreign policy making and implementation process, and influenced its perception towards world affairs including its understanding of “responsible power.” This study, therefore, collects data from 1978 to 2010 in order to reveal China’s evolving responsibility reflected in its political rhetoric.

The internal validation of research methodology and inference is usually determined by scientific peers through the replication process. On the contrary, an external validity aims to establish a broader importance to readers beyond the scientific community. It is largely depended on the representative of the sample surveyed. External validity of a content analysis can increase if the content coded is pervasive and important to the audience. This study has selected Beijing Review as the only subject for mainly three reasons. First, launched in March 1958 by the Chinese government, Beijing Review is China’s only official national newsmagazines in English. It reports and comments on China’s “social, political, economic and cultural affairs, policy changes and latest developments.” It also offers “in-depth analysis on major regional and international events.” Unlike People’s Daily, Xinhua Daily and some other Chinese language newspapers which are mainly read by Chinese domestic readers, Beijing Review has been distributed throughout China and in 150 countries and regions worldwide with versions of English, French, Japanese, German and Spanish. It aims to help foreigners “to know about China’s policies and study China’s political situation and development trends.” Representing the points of view of Chinese government to foreign readers and the international community, Beijing Review is suitable for studying China’s official discourses about national image and identity.

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22 Riffe, pp. 145-146.
23 Neuendorf, p. 115.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
English and thus makes it easier and more accurate to locate the key words. Third, it is not necessary to engage any more official publications because the opinions towards major world issues in different Chinese official publications are similar and rarely contradict each other since they are all administrated by Chinese government. Therefore, even one sample publication can be representative of the whole group. Fourth, the author is aware that what individual Chinese think about China’s international responsibility may not necessarily be the same thing as the official position. However, since public opinion and social groups are not the main research subjects here, this content analysis does not involve any non-official resources. Lastly, the study starts from 1978 when China launched the Reforming and Opening Up. It does not include the earlier years from 1949 to 1977 because post-1978 is a more suitable period to observe China’s state socialisation in international society when China began to involve in various international arrangements as a relatively “normal” or “cooperative” power instead of a “revolutionary state” aiming to transporting communist ideology to the rest part of the world.

**Sampling**

Probability sampling ensures the contents equal chance of being included in the sample, and thus can enhance the credibility of the quantitative research. This study adopts a systematic sampling which is one of the probability methods of sampling and involves selecting every nth unit in the sampling pool. Since the starting point is randomly selected, each unit in systematic sampling has the equal chance of being chosen.

From 1978 to 2010 (33 years), there are 1664 issues of *Beijing Review* (52 issues per year). This author selected samples every three years starting from 1979. There are altogether 572 issues of the newsmagazine in 11 years under survey. The coverage rate is about 33.3%. In every issue, about 6 to 10 articles related to China’s foreign affairs and international relations have been surveyed. This number fluctuates depending on the

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international events happened during that week and China’s involvement into them. In a few issues, 1 or 2 articles about China’s domestic politics have been reviewed as well in order to record China’s discourse of “good governance” and its domestic responsibility in the third phase. This author has surveyed about 5000 articles, 60% of which include the key words designed in Content Analysis Protocol for this study.

**Content Analysis**

Based on the Code Book, the author has counted and recorded the times of the discourse in each category of the key words showing in the sample texts. The number in each category has been summed up by year (see Table 3); and annual frequency rate for each phase of state responsibility has been measured according to the formulation:

\[ p = n/N \]

- \( p \): annual frequency rate of each phase
- \( n \): annual frequency of each phase
- \( N \): the sum of times of all phases annually

**General Trend: 1978-2010**

The statistics reveals that China’s official discourse and interpretation about state’s responsibility as a responsible power has evolved during the past thirty years (Table 3). China emphasised its identity as a “peaceful state” by showing its obedience to the norm of non-intervention when it deals with the inter-state relations. The content analysis records a large number of texts indicating that China regards itself as “peace-loving state” and “anti-hegemonism state” respecting other states’ independence and sovereignty and has no intention to interfere or ally with other states. The frequency of this discourse overwhelms the other two kinds of discourse about China’s involvement in international regime and its image of a “solidarist” state in international society until the middle of the 1990s when it significantly declines.

The dominant discourse about China’s commitment to non-intervention norm (Phase One) is overpopulated by China’s focusing on its participation in international regime (Phase Two) in the mid-1990s. Therefore, this study holds that China’s attempt in the first
phase of being a responsible power is completed in about 1995. Figure 2 demonstrates that the frequency rates of China’s official discourse about its involvement in international organisations, its compliance with international norm and law and cooperative behaviour in world affairs has increased dramatically during the past three decades. This discourse has enjoyed the highest frequency rate among the three categories of discourse since 1995 and has had a growing trend throughout the recent years. This trend shows China’s increasing attention to its role in international regimes and its cooperation with other states and organisations.

**Figure 2** Frequency rates of China’s official discourse of state responsibility in different phases

The third classification of discourse is related to China’s efforts of offering global common good as an influential great power, shouldering international obligations in a wider range and promoting the value of human rights and democracy in international community. Figure 2 displays a slightly increasing trend (from about 1% to nearly 10%) of the frequency of this discourse, which suggests China’s modest attempt to the state’s responsibility under this category of being a “solidarist state.” Without an obvious progress to fulfil this new international standard, the boundary line between Phase Two and Phase Three is indistinct. This study draws the line at the year of 2005 when the frequency of Phase Three gradually increases.
Phase One: 1978-1995

According to Rosemary Foot, the first phase of being a responsible state in international society is featured by a focus on inter-state relations in which states as the main players in the world arena should follow the norm of non-intervention reinforced by UN Charter after the Second World War. China’s official understanding of state’s responsibility has a particular emphasis on this phase from 1979 to 1989 (Figure 3), which is mainly reflected on its discourse of China as a “peace-loving state.” Since the beginning of the 1990s, the frequency of the discourse in Phase One has largely decreased. However, China’s self-identification as a “peace-loving state” which aims to maintain regional and international stability and develop friendship and partnership with other countries still enjoys a relatively higher frequency in its official discourse (around 20% to 25%). On the contrary, the frequency of the other two discourses has reduced to a very low percentage since 2003 (less than 6%).

Figure 3 Frequency rates of different aspects of state responsibility in Phase One

Figure 3 reveals that China’s understanding of state responsibility has evolved beyond Phase One. Although on many occasions it still believes that maintaining peace and stability and respecting other states’ independence and sovereignty is one of the
criteria of a responsible power, China are less likely to emphasise its efforts or responsibility in Phase One in its official discourse. Particularly, the advocate of anti-hegemonism, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism as a part of China’s responsibility in world affairs has been greatly weakened facing the new international standard of “responsible state” in Phase Two.

Phase Two: 1990-1999

A responsible state according to the standard in Phase Two stresses the importance of participation in international regimes, compliance with international norm and law, and active cooperation with other states or organisations. China’s official discourse emphasising its responsibility of Phase Two has been increasing since 1979 (especially from 1989 to 2001). However, different aspects of this phase have demonstrated various dynamics of China’s official discourse about state responsibility (Figure 4). China’s discourse about a “cooperative state” as one of the facets of its national image has largely increased by 30% to 40% since its Reforming and Opening Up in the end of the 1970s. With China’s entrance into the WTO in 2001, this growing trend of “cooperative state” is very likely to be maintained towards next a few years. Nevertheless, the frequency rates of its participation in international organisations and regimes has increased modestly (about 10%) and even dropped a little since 2003. With a general growing trend in Phase Two, however, the frequency of China’s discourse of its “compliance with international norm and law” has not changed much and has maintained at a low level with a minor fluctuation. Therefore, the increasing frequency of Phase Two is mainly determined by China’s growing emphasis and involvement in international cooperation.
**Figure 4** Frequency rates of different aspects of state responsibility in Phase Two

![Chart showing frequency rates of different aspects of state responsibility in Phase Two](chart.png)

**Phase Three 2000-2009**

In this phase, states fulfilled their international responsibility by offering global common goods and promoting human rights and democracy as influential players in the international community. The content analysis has found that in its official discourse, China has mentioned more about its pursuit of great power status and its willingness to fulfil international obligations and advocate of human rights and democracy since the 1990s especially after 2000 (Figure 5). The frequency rates of the discourse about “great power status” and “international responsibility” has increased since about 2000. However, the China’s official discourse about promoting human rights and democracy has experienced a major fluctuation in the past thirty years with a peak of frequency of 6% in 1997 and the lowest percentage of nearly zero towards the end of the 1980s. After several ups and downs, this frequency rate has been decreasing during the last five years. Compared to the other two phases, the low frequency rate of China’s official discourse of its international responsibility in Phase Three suggests that there still exists a gap between China’s understanding and attempts to be a responsible power and the international standard of responsible state.
Assessing the Content Analysis

Compared with Foot’s three phases of being a responsible state in international society, China’s pursuit of “responsible power,” to some extent, follows the evolution of three phases as the international standards. There is a clear trend depicting that China’s official discourses of “responsible power” has evolved through Phase One to Phase Two of the international standards. This study starts from the year of 1978. The evidence shows that China’s understanding of state responsibility as a responsible power from 1978 to 1995 matches the criterion in Phase One and builds on the international norms of non-intervention and sovereign equality of states. The year from 1978 to 1995 also witnesses the transition from Phase One to Phase Two. China has been increasingly focusing on its international duties and obligations of complying with international regimes and organisations in the past three decades. When the frequency of texts about “international regimes” surpasses that of “non-intervention norm” in middle of the 1990s, China has completed the transition from the first phase to the second phase.

Nevertheless, this study cannot identify a strong tendency that China’s attempt of being a responsible power has transformed from Phase Two to Phase Three as what the
international criteria proposed by Foot suggests. Figure 2 illustrates that the frequency rates of China’s official discourses about state responsibility in providing global common goods, promoting individual security and fostering the exercise of democracy have not increased sufficiently for China to fulfil Foot’s criteria of responsible state in Phase Three. Although figure 2 has shown a slightly growing trend in Phase Three, this content analysis maintains that in a short time period China is not very likely to establish a responsible power identity that can match the newest international standards in Phase Three.

Besides the fluctuation and the slow growth of the frequency line in Phase Three, this study has noted some other obstacles on China’s way to become a responsible power in international society. First, the frequency rates of different aspects of state’s responsibility within the same phase has experienced unbalanced development, especially in Phases Two and Three, which reveals that China does not fulfil the criteria of a responsible state across the full range. In Phase Two, China tends to emphasise its duties in international cooperation, mainly in global economic arrangements. China’s identity as a “cooperative state” has been largely strengthened in its official discourses. However, this study finds out that China is less likely to discuss about its compliance with international law and norms and its active participation in international organisations – qualities that Foot believes can “make up the substance of international life” and thus are important standards of responsible states.\(^{30}\) Similarly, China’s increasing discourses about shouldering international obligations and playing an active role in international society as an “influential state” and a “great power” has contributed most to the minor growing trend in Phase Three. However, the frequency rates of China’s official discourses about promoting human rights and the value of democracy has fluctuated greatly in the past thirty years and reduced in the most recent five years. Those unbalanced discourses of state responsibility suggest that China may not have achieved its objective of being considered a responsible power status in international society.

Second, China needs to make greater progress if it wants to fulfil the newest requirement of responsible power in Phase Three and complete its transition from Phase

\(^{30}\) Foot, p. 8.
Two to Phase Three. The content analysis identifies several major fluctuations in China’s official discourses about human rights issues and its promotion of representative democracy. Those fluctuations may be related to both China’s domestic politics and international political situation. China’s official publications have entered into more discussions about human rights and democracy with its increasing involvement in international affairs since the late 1980s. However, in the face of its domestic political crisis in 1989 and the uncertainty caused by the drastic change of Eastern European communist states in the early 1990s, China promotion human rights and democratic governance declined, reflected in the major drop of frequency from 1990 to 1994.

Being criticised by many western states especially the United States, it appears that China realised that human rights issues had become an obstacle to the establishment of healthy trade relations with major states and gaining of the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) treatment from the United States. Since 1994, topics supporting human rights and democracy in China’s official discourse started to increase again. The frequency reached its peak in around 1997 when China signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the same year and joined the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in the following year. Yet, after joining the WTO and gaining permanent MFN status from the United States, China seemed to be less motivated to continue this growing trend, and the frequency dropped largely afterwards. Similar to Foot’s criteria of responsible state in the Phase Three, some scholars have recently suggested that providing “responsible governance” is an essential indicator of responsible power.31 According to this standard, China’s needs to make more efforts to enhance the prospects that China can be widely recognised and accepted as a responsible power in international society.

Altruistic, Ambitious or Ambiguous: A Discourse Analysis of China’s Responsibility

“Shared Responsibilities”: China’s Bilateral Relations

Sino-US relations

The Sino-American relationship is one of the most important bilateral relations in the world. Chinese government always highlights its relations with major powers, especially with the United States. China’s US policy has become an essential component of China’s foreign policy; and numerous top Chinese political leaders have commented about Sino-US relations since the 1970s when the two countries established their diplomatic relationship. In Chinese official discourses over the past thirty years, the role that China should play and the responsibility that China should shoulder in this bilateral relationship has gradually changed, which reflects China’s evolving interpretation of state responsibility.

First, Sino-US relations have witnessed China’s willingness to share expanding regional and global responsibilities with the United States since 1978. In the 1980s and the early of the 1990s, China emphasised its responsibility in Asia-Pacific region with the United States. It believes that “we [China and the United States] must promote mutual understand to live up to our responsibilities to the Asian-Pacific area.”32 When it mentioned its international duty of peace and security, China tended to make its regional obligation its strategic priority. China’s former Defense Minister Chi Haotian stated that “China and the United States share the responsibility to maintain peace and stability and promote prosperity in the Asian-Pacific region and other parts of the world.”33 Compared to the Asian-Pacific region, “other parts of the world” seem to be just a political rhetoric without much explicit indication of China’s international duty or strategic consideration.

However, since the late of the 1990s, China has started to expand its responsibility in Sino-US relations from Asia-Pacific region to the global range, even though on many occasions China still regards itself a regional power instead of a global power. In the post-Cold War environment, China believes that “they [China and the United States] should jointly share responsibility for maintaining peace and stability of the world.”34 The former Chinese Foreign Ministry Qian Qichen addressed that “as permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations and major nuclear powers, China and the United States have important responsibilities in safeguarding global peace and

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stability.” Chinese former Prime Minister Wen Jiabao also noted that Sino-US cooperation is a responsibility that “the two countries shoulder in the interest of world peace and development.” Nevertheless, a world-wide duty shared with the United States does not weaken China’s role in Asia-Pacific. China and the United States have “special responsibility for peace, security and prosperity in the world, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.”

Second, China expresses its responsibility in Sino-US relations using increasingly more detailed language throughout the past three decades. When it initially described its “major responsibilities in today’s world situation” shared with the United States, China seldom explicitly pointed out what kind of responsibility it shoulders in this bilateral relationship. An often used discourse is that both countries have a mounting responsibility for safeguarding world peace and stability; and maintaining “peace” and “stability” are largely emphasised in Sino-US relations as the duties of the two countries. In recent years, however, China has discussed the idea of responsibility in different specific issue areas in its official discourses. Sino-US economic cooperation and duties to the global economy is frequently mentioned. China’s former President Jiang Zemin stated that economy “has become a primary concern in shaping today’s state-to-state relations [Sino-US relations].” China iterates that the United States and China “shoulder important responsibilities… for promoting world economic development and prosperity.” Besides its duty in “global economic challenges,” former President Hu Jintao suggests that China and the United States “share extensive common interests and shoulder important responsibilities in resolving hot-button world issues.” China and the United States “share common understanding on climate change and new energy and are

willing to work together in these fields,” and they also have “an important responsibility in...improving human environment and many other important matters.”

Third, China has been pursuing an equal footing with the United States in the world arena in is discussion of its responsibilities in Sino-US relationship. Initially China emphasised that it is the “largest developing country”; while the United States is the “world's most developed country.” This discourse reveals China’s awareness of its limited state capacity compared with the United States. Therefore, China used to argue that the United States and the former Soviet Union should bear “a special responsibility” in many world affairs, such as nuclear disarmament. Paradoxically, social psychology of intergroup relations theory suggests that China’s rhetoric choice to compare itself with the United States indicates that China is seeking a superpower status like the United States. And this type of comparison serves to inspire self-improvement. With its rising power China has demonstrated a more confident image in the world stage, and it tries to hold an equal position and establish a partnership with the United States. As such its discourse has changed from highlighting the gap with the United State to building a great-power identity. Jiang Zemin indicated in his speech that “China and the United States, as two big powers, are greatly responsible for the world’s future.” Hu Jintao also addressed that “as influential nations in the world, China and the United States share extensive common interests and shoulder important responsibilities...” Those discourses, to some extent, can imply China’s more confident and ambitious attitude than ever before in Sino-US relations, and its willingness to shoulder international obligation as much as the United State does.

Sino-Russian Relations

In the Chinese official discourses surveyed, China’s relations with Russia are

45 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
49 Ding Ying, p. 10.
frequently mentioned and discussed especially since the mid-1990s. In the post-Cold War era, both China and Russia have been trying to develop their national economies and rebuild their great power status in international community. China often describes the two states as occupying similar positions in the world and thus sharing certain common international obligations. This equality extends to China’s willingness to accept Russia’s “major-power status” as what China perceives itself to be. Jiang Zemin said in his Russian tour that “…as influential powers, and permanent members of the UN Security Council, both our two countries shoulder the important responsibility of maintaining world peace and stability.”50 Regarding them as “two major nuclear powers,” China holds that Russia and China “share major responsibility for world peace and security.”51 This discourse of commonality with Russia has been reflected in China’s and Russia’s policy aimed at creating a more vigorous multipolar world. The two countries continue to “strengthen their military technology-related cooperation, while abiding by international obligations as agreed by the two countries.”52 Through this bilateral cooperation, China claims that the two countries “share the responsibility of promoting the building of a multipolar world and establishing a fair and reasonable new international order” where emerging powers, such as the China and Russia, can play more important roles.53

*China’s Relations with Other Major Countries*

In its bilateral relations, China increasingly tends to discuss more about its responsibility with major powers in the world instead of common responsibilities with medium or small states. In the sample texts, there are another four countries, namely France, Britain, Australia and Japan, with which China addresses the discourse of state responsibility as a responsible power. The past two decades has witnessed closer Sino-French relations. Jiang Zemin noted that “China and France, both being permanent members of the United States Security Council with special responsibilities for the

development of the present international situation, must continue to intensify their cooperation.⁵⁴ Being the first western country to establish diplomatic relationship with China in 1964, France has been China’s important strategic partner. Chinese top political leaders often emphasise that the two countries share “identical view on many major international issues.”⁵⁵ The two sides “hold the view that in the context of profound changes in the international political and economic situation, China and France, shoulder major responsibilities in maintaining world peace and promoting development.”⁵⁶

The discourse of responsibility can be traced less often in Sino-UK relations than in Sino-French relations. The language China uses and the topic it discusses in Sino-UK relations are relatively broad and vague without much specific policy implications. Nevertheless, the discourse of “cooperation” prevails in those sample texts, which can be identified in many other discourses of China’s bilateral relations and reveals China’s cooperative attitude in world affairs since 1978. Jiang addressed that “challenges and opportunities lie in front of us [China and Britain], and both of us have a responsibility to promote cooperation.”⁵⁷

In its relations with Australia and Japan, China is more likely to stress its shared responsibilities with those countries in Asia-Pacific region rather than discussing their international obligations in a wider global range. Jiang Zeming referred to China and Australia’s regional responsibility and cooperation in his speech, noting that “both China and Australia are major powers in the Asia-Pacific region that have the responsibility to maintain regional security and promote regional economic cooperation.”⁵⁸ With Japan’s economic rise following by its pursuit of a “great-power” status, China in its official discourses indicates that China and Japan should take “common responsibility for the region [Asia-Pacific].”⁵⁹ This kind of discourse reveals China’s awareness and acceptance of Australia and Japan as “regional powers” and its cooperative and accommodating attitude towards those two states.

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“A Sense of Responsibility”: China’s Multilateral Relations

China in Regional Issues

With an emphasis on its bilateral relations, China hesitated to get involved in multilateral arrangement or regional forum until the end of the 1980s. The discourses addressed by China’s top political leaders during the past several decades shows that China has become more willing to participate in regional and global issues with confidence and “a sense of responsibility” as a great power in international community. China has advocated the adherence to the international norms, especially the UN Charter, to deal with regional disputes and conflicts. Addressing Cambodian and Vietnamese conflicts in the 1980s, former Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang believed that “China seeks only to uphold justice, oppose aggression and adhere to the norms of international relations and the UN Charter.” The official discourses then demonstrates China’s “responsible attitude” towards this regional issue by claiming its “determination to safeguard the norm of international relations and China’s broad and open attitude in protecting the interest of the Cambodian people, rather than its own interests.” In the 1980s, China expressed its concerns about regional peace and its compliance with international norms, but it did not explicitly indicate what kind of international norm (except for UN Charter) it should adhere to and what kind of role it should play in regional affairs.

Since the 1990s, China’s official discourse about China’s attitude towards regional issues has become clearer and more specific. Discussing about the 1991 Gulf Crisis, a Chinese ambassador mentioned China’s “principled and responsible position” in this issue, and China’s respect of the international norm of “independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.” This international norm of non-intervention has produced its variation in China’s compliance and interpretation of it entitled the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” in China’s official discourse. Discussing Korean Reunification, former Prime Minister Li Peng held that “the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence

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embody the most fundamental norms governing international relations and they should serve as the basis for a new international order to be established to facilitate the fight for a lasting world peace and the efforts of all countries to seek common development.” This shows China’s moved away from being simply a “norm-taker” to a potential “norm-maker” for a “new international order” in international society.

Since the 1990s China’s increased confidence and ambitious approach to regional affairs has been further exhibited in its official discourse discussion its status and role in the international community when China not only referred to itself as a “big country” physically but also as a “great power” bearing international duties and obligations. The official discourse of China’s “historical mission and sense of responsibility” has accumulated since then. China’s former Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan commented that “China, as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, shoulders the responsibility for regional peace and security.” The Chinese government gradually realised that “the concept of just focusing on internal issues on its own is not suitable to China’s goal of being a responsible big country.” In its relations with neighbouring countries, China has attributed what it characterises as its altruistic attitude on its intention to shoulder more responsibilities based on its “great power” status. For example, while dealing with trade relations with Viet Nam, Laos and Pakistan, Hu Jintao noted that China would like to make concessionary trade arrangements with “countries in a disadvantaged position in international competition.” He said that “with these arrangements, China undertook greater responsibilities commensurate with its major power status in the region.”

China and the United Nations

China has not actively participated in international organisations until the PRC government joined the United Nations in 1971 replacing Taiwan. Nevertheless many scholars argue that China was not deeply involved in the activities of international

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68 Ibid.
regimes in the first decade of its membership. This study has found that there are increasing discourses of China’s responsibility in international organisations as a “responsible great power,” especially China’s “due obligation” in the United Nations.

China highly values the influence of the UN in world affairs. It believes that the most important way for China to fulfil its duty and play a positive role in the UN is to abide by the UN Charter, which can support its “responsible power” status in international society. China’s former Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian stated in the 1980s that “China has always abided by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and devoted itself to the just cause of maintaining international peace and security.” Compliance with the UN Charter as a widely accepted international norm has become an essential criteria for China to establish its “responsible state” image. On many occasions, China iterates its attempts to safeguard the UN Charter and tries to relate those attempts to its international obligation. It claims that “since the restoration of its lawful seat in the UN, China has unswervingly defended the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and has earnestly and responsibly participated in the world of the UN in various fields.”

China in the past 30 years has consistently emphasised that the permanent members of the UN Security Council should shoulder “special responsibilities conferred on them by the UN Charter.” As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China has changed its official discourse about its role and duties in the UN during the past several decades with a shift from “collective responsibility” to “China’s responsibility.” In an article discussing the UN’s function and influence in 1991, *Beijing Review* indicated that the UN Security Council is “authorized to handle major affairs concerning the maintenance of international peace and security and its five permanent members are conferred the right to exercise the veto when necessary.” This right means that the five states “assume major responsibilities and obligations…” This kind of discourse clearly emphasises the equal standing of the five permanent members of the Security Council. On one hand, it shows that China understood that it shared the same responsibilities as the

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71 “China Advocates Stronger UN Role.” P. 16.  
73 Ibid.
other permanent members of the UN Security Council. On the other, without a discussion of substantive content of its obligations, the ascription of equal status seemingly entails no real policy commitments a part of the collective responsibility in the UN.

It appears that China was not well-prepared for bearing its responsibilities in accordance with its “great power” status in international society until recently when China changed its official discourse from “collective responsibility” to “China’s responsibility.” China has tended to explicitly express that it should take on more international obligations commensurate with its “responsible power” identity. In 2006, an article focusing on China’s role in the UN stated that “China is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, which means that it should shoulder more responsibility than most of the other UN members in maintaining world peace.” Instead of concentrating on “shared duty” or “collective responsibility,” this article articulates China’s “more responsibility” as a major power than most of other countries in the world.

**China and Other International Organisations**

Although China has joined many international organisations, in the official discourse surveyed by this study China mentions more about its participation and obligations in international economic institutions, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisations. There are many normative descriptions about what China thinks those international organisations “ought” to do, which reflect China’s understanding of international responsibility as an influential state in international society. For example, former Prime Minister Li Peng in his speech advocated economic assistance towards developing countries by “creating favourable conditions and helping them achieve sustainable development,” and noted that it was the “shared responsibility of the international community and an important task for international financial institutions.” Long Yongtu, China’s chief negotiator at the WTO accession talks commented about China’s fulfilment of its duties in international organisations: “as a responsible country, China is always serious about the implementation of obligations made under international

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There are some other international institutions in which China is not a member. However, China’s connection and involvement in some of those institutions is often discussed by both scholars and political leaders. China’s official discourse has shown China’s changing attitude towards its role in those institutions, such as the Group of 8. China used to be more or less reluctant to participate in the G8 mechanism even if it was invited to do so. China has called the G8 a “rich countries’ club” with a negative implication and a suspicion of its activities and goals. Nevertheless, aiming at “playing its due role as a responsible big country in dealing with world issues,” China seemingly has realised the importance of its participation in this mechanism.\textsuperscript{77} China has started to regard G8 as a forum to “express its diplomatic concepts and views on important international issues” and to establish a responsible image: “although it is not the only opportunity, and not even a particularly important chance, for China to have a say in international affairs, experts held the G8 can provide a platform for China to speak out its views on world issues as a responsible big country.”\textsuperscript{78}

In recent years, China has experienced a growing involvement in G8 although it approaches the group cautiously. It particularly emphasises the role of G8 in international economic arrangements. China has recognised that “it should gradually integrate with G8 countries as part of the economic system, selectively participate in G8 discussions and undertake international responsibility in accordance with China’s status and practical interests.”\textsuperscript{79} This “closer movement” toward G8 countries demonstrates China’s more confident mindset as a “responsible great power” and a pragmatic foreign policy as well. After the Group of 8 evolved into the Group of 20, China tends to discuss more about its participation and contribution as a “responsible power” in G20 without much hesitation. In 2009, \textit{Beijing Review} noted that “since the G20 summit in Washington, D.C. last year [2008], China, as a responsible member of the international community, has provided a lot of assistance and support through a variety of means to a number of countries and

\textsuperscript{76} “China Submits Key Papers to WTO.” \textit{Beijing Review}, Vol. 43, No. 14 (2000), p. 5.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid. p. 9.
regions.\textsuperscript{80}

\textit{“Common but Differentiated Responsibilities”: China and Global Issues}

\textit{Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation}

Examining \textit{Beijing Review} from 1979 to 2009, this study finds that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is one of the global issues most salient to China. Several top Chinese political leaders have discussed nuclear disarmament in this official publication since the early 1980s. China has demonstrated a positive attitude towards nuclear disarmament and particularly discussed about which countries should fulfil their obligations in this global issue. China has promoted a “collective responsibility” arguing that “disarmament and international society are inseparable,” and thus every country in intentional society should contribute to this project.\textsuperscript{81} Moreover, China held that this collective action of disarmament was related to its advocacy of anti-hegemonism, especially in the 1980s. It believes that “[in the issue of nuclear disarmament] the nations of the world must oppose hegemonism in order to reduce tensions and guarantee security.”\textsuperscript{82} Therefore, the duties of disarmament were to be mainly shouldered by the superpowers which had the most potential to be hegemons.

Adopting an “anti-hegemonism discourse,” China suggested that the United State and Soviet Union, as two superpowers which possess most nuclear weapons in the world, should bear more responsibilities in nuclear disarmament. Chinese ambassador Qian Jiadong in the Geneva Disarmament Conference stated that “the superpowers, which possess far greater military capacity than other countries, should bear special responsibility for ending the arms…”\textsuperscript{83} Former Premier Zhao Ziyang also urged “the two countries [the United States and Soviet Union] to take the lead in ending research, improvement and production of nuclear weapons and to reach an agreement on a drastic reduction of their nuclear arsenals, so as to create the conditions for an international conference on the eventual destruction of all nuclear weapons.”\textsuperscript{84}

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\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
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The discourse on “special responsibility” of the two superpowers in nuclear disarmament was repeatedly evident in *Beijing Review* during the 1980s and 1990s. Qian Qichen stated that “the two superpowers bear a special responsibility for disarmament and should take the lead in drastically reducing their armaments, especially their nuclear weapons.”\(^85\) China has not used the word of “superpower” very often after the end of the Cold War. When he addressed at the 52\(^{nd}\) session of UN Assembly, Qian noted that “the target of disarmament should not be shifted to developing nations, as countries with the largest and most sophisticated arsenals bear a special responsibility for disarmament.” Considering itself a developing country, China suggested that the United States and Russia should take the lead in nuclear disarmament.

Having excused itself from major duties in nuclear disarmament, China’s political leaders have maintained that “China, which possesses a very small number of nuclear weapons, has never avoided its responsibility to disarm.”\(^86\) Zhao Ziyang pointed out that “China is ready to shoulder its due responsibility in averting the threat of nuclear war by encouraging the destruction of all nuclear weapons.”\(^87\) And Qian indicated that “China is committed to the maintenance of world peace and interested in the attainment of disarmament.”\(^88\)

As many Chinese political leaders suggested, China’s obligations in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were mainly determined by international norms and law. China believed that in nuclear disarmament, all states “should observe the United Nations Charter and the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence so that all nations may live in harmony.”\(^89\) Sha Zukang, the former Chief of Chinese Foreign Ministry’s Department of Arms Control and Disarmament, emphasised China’s fulfilment of its legal duty in nuclear non-proliferation. He noted that “China actively participated in the negotiations of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), signed and ratified the convention in 1993 and 1997, and has fully implemented its legal obligations.”\(^90\)

\(^86\) Xia Yishan, “China Pushes for Total Disarmament.” p.17.
\(^87\) “Zhao Vows Stand Against Nuclear Arms.” P. 7.
\(^88\) Qian Qichen, “China’s Stand on Disarmament.” P. 17.
\(^89\) Xia Yishan, “China Pushes for Total Disarmament.” p.17.
Environmental Issues

Environmental issues did not cause global attention until the 1960s. The 1980s witnessed a growing incorporation of environmental destruction, climate change and resource scarcity into national security assessments by governments, media and academics. In *Beijing Review* surveyed by this study, China had little discussion about environmental issues until the early 1990s when China started to publicise its official interpretation of the duties that environmental issues had brought to world. It argued for two reasons that developed countries should take the main responsibilities in protecting the global environment. First, China believed that a state’s responsibilities in environmental issues, such as the emission of greenhouse gases “should be viewed both in historical and cumulative terms, and in terms of current emission.” Therefore, “having prospered by using the world’s resources, the developed countries should now shoulder a greater share of the responsibility…to protect and improve the global environment.” Second, China argued that with “greater financial and technological capacities, [developed countries] must take the lead in eliminating the damage to the environment as well as in assisting the developing countries to deal with the problems facing them.”

Considering developed countries’ higher duty and greater capacity in dealing with environmental issues, China announced its “solemn commitment to participating actively, on the basis of differentiated responsibilities and to the best of its ability, in the global efforts for environmental protection and sustainable development” in the *Beijing Declaration on Environment and Development* in 1991. Since then, the principle of “common but differentiated responsibility” in global governance of environmental issues has been emphasised by Chinese government. Dealing with climate change, China claims it “one of the biggest sufferers” and points out that it has been “actively engaged in relevant consultations and negotiations with other signatories to the UN Framework...
Convention on Climate Change on the principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibility’.  

In his remarks at the 16th APEC Economics Leaders’ Meeting in 2008, President Hu Jintao advocated “collective action” towards climate change. He indicated that all countries should “take up responsibilities and jointly tackle climate change.” Nevertheless, President Hu highlighted the principle of “common but differentiated responsibility” which suggested that developed industrialised countries should contribute more than developing countries in mitigating climate change. Later, addressing China’s “foreign policy focus,” Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi noted that “[the success of global governance of climate change] is very much dependent on the developing and developed countries observing the principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibility’.” Abiding this principle, China has cooperated with many other countries and organisations to deal with climate and fulfil its “common responsibility” in the past ten years. However, always regarding itself a developing country, China has not prepared to shoulder any “major responsibility” in this global issue. Adopting a pragmatic and realistic policy towards environment issues, China can only participate “to the best of its capacity.”

World Economy

Having examined China’s official discourses about its international duty and obligation, this study found that compared with other global affairs China has demonstrated the most confidence and sense of responsibility in global economic issues. In economics area, there has been little discussion about “special responsibility” of developed countries or “shared responsibility” between China and other countries in Beijing Review since 2000s. Instead, China tends to regard itself a “big responsible country” which has been contributing a lot to international economic growth and stability; meanwhile it is eager to claim that this new identity of “responsible power” has been

98 Ibid.
widely accepted by the international community.

The “responsible power” image can be traced back to the Asian financial crisis in 1997-98 when China did not depreciate its currency. Instead, it provided emergency aid to some countries affected by the financial crisis. China has indicated that it had “sacrificed a lot to prevent the RMB from being devalued in order to maintain the stability of Asian and world economies.”

China believes that “it has been widely praised as ‘a big responsible country’ by the international community.”

Facing the present global financial crisis, former Prime Minister Wen Jiabao expressed his optimistic observation and confidence in China’s economic growth in his European trip in 2009. Wen addressed that “China’s economy will continue to grow fast and steadily and called for confidence, cooperation and responsibility in overcoming the current global financial crisis.” On another occasion when he exchanged views with other global leaders about dealing with financial crisis, Wen reiterated China’s “responsible and constructive stance.”

Besides fighting against the global financial crisis, China has emphasised that it has taken its “full responsibility of promoting the world economic development” as “a big country with strong sense of responsibility.” First, China has pointed to its compliance with international economic regime and its willingness to further integrate with the world economy. It particularly stressed its participation in the World Trade Organisations as a responsible power. In an article reporting on the World Economic Development Declaration Conference held in Zhuhai in 2003, Beijing Review stated that “although it is still not long since China’s accession to the World Trade Organizations, it has taken its responsibility in promoting world economic development and been actively involved in the organizations.”

Second, China has also shown its determination to pursue the reform of its economic system, especially its currency exchange rate mechanism which has been criticised by many western countries. China believes that as “a big developing country and also a

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101 Ibid.
rising country with relatively fast development, undoubtedly, it has the responsibility to maintain and promote the stable growth of the world economy.” Therefore, it should “accelerate the reform of various economic systems, including the RMB exchange rate mechanism.” Moreover, China highly valued “the existing rules of international society” and the cooperation with other countries to “establish strategic mutual trust and win-win.”

**Assessing Discourse Analysis**

*Altruism and Ambition*

In the texts surveyed by this study, China has been using normative language to articulate its international duty as a “responsible power/state,” which to some extent demonstrates Beijing’s altruistic attitude towards world affairs. Hedley Bull argues that great powers have unequal responsibilities with other medium or small powers in international society, and should contribute more to maintain international order. As early as in the 1980s, China realised that it should take an international responsibility which was commensurate with its “great power” image and identity in international society. Even though it still regarded itself as a developing country with relatively low per-capita GDP, China believed that it could not waive its international obligation. As China’s former President Hu Yaobang indicated in his report to the 12th National Congress of China’s Communist Party, China’s international responsibility was based on the nature of the state: “being a large country with a population of one billion, China ought to make a greater contribution to the world community.” Meanwhile, China’s duty was also expected by the international community since “it is only natural that people place hopes on us [China].” And Hu further suggested that “what we [China] have accomplished falls far short of what we ought to have done” and China would “redouble our [China’s] efforts to step up our construction so as to play our due role in safeguarding

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107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
world peace and promoting human progress.”

China’s altruistic and cooperative attitude as a “responsible power” in the international society is shaped in the process of its image and identity transition from a “revolutionary state” to an “amicable state” and an “insider” of the international system. China used to stand on the side of the “Third World countries” and join the campaign of anti-hegemonism, anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism by offering those countries verbal or substantial support. China claimed that its international duty was to “struggle resolutely against imperialism, hegemonism and colonialism together with the other third world countries.” The language of “struggle,” “fight” and “oppose” was frequently used in China’s official discourse, along with its announced efforts of “establishing a new world order” instead of the “old current pattern.” Thus, China projected an image of “revolutionary state” which saw “the virtue in contention and upheaval” rather than in “order and stability.”

The content analysis suggests a rapid decline in the frequency of the China’s discourse of “anti-hegemonism, anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism” from 1979 to 1991. The discourse analysis further identifies a rising use of language expressing China’s compliance with international norms, which demonstrates China’s attempt to be an altruistic and cooperative state inside the international system. Instead of promoting a “new world order,” China has expressed its intention of being a “status-quo power” by following the current international norms: “in the new century, China will not only follow the existing rules of international society, but also take the initiative to cooperate with other countries to establish strategic mutual trust and win-win.” The term of “international community/society” and China’s membership in it has been repeatedly mentioned to display China’s international socialisation when China discusses its “responsible power” identity. In his Australian trip in 2006, Wen Jiabao addressed that “as a member of the international community, China needs to keep pace with the global trend,

111 Ibid.
112 Ibid., p. 31.
115 Xia Bin, “Global Imbalance: on Us or on the United States.” p. 18.
and shoulder, together with other countries, international responsibilities for maintaining peace.”

China has emphasised that its rising power and continuous development is peaceful and constructive for the Asia-Pacific region and the world. In 2006 China’s State Council Information Office published an article entitled “China’s Peaceful Development Road” in Beijing Review which indicated that at it was “active in the settlement of serious international and regional problems, China shoulders broad international obligations, and plays a responsible and constructive role.” Wen Jiabao also spoke to the media that “China sticks to a road of peaceful development;” and this policy choice “results from China’s traditional culture, development needs and national interests” and most importantly is based on China’s belief that “it is already a responsible country of the international community.”

Not only does this language demonstrate a cooperative and constructive attitude, China has also posted a more confident and ambitious gesture in international society as a “responsible power.” China is more likely to “share responsibility” with other great powers and regional powers, such the United States, Russia, France, Australia and Japan. Those discourses give China equal status with those influential countries and can be seen as part of an effort to establish China’s role as “a participant, constructor and maintainer of the world order, with the strength to maintain peace and stability as a responsible big country that has worldwide influence.” Moreover, having realised that “in history, major world powers all served as contributors to the international order,” a confident and ambitious China nowadays has shown its willingness to be identified as such a contributor. Moreover, it is clearly not satisfied with just being a “norm-taker” but is attempting to become a “norm-maker” in international society. This is evident is the change from the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as the “correct norms in dealing

with state-to-state relations”\textsuperscript{121} to a more confident idea of “peaceful rising.” Recently, Beijing has initiated and promoted “the new idea of world harmony,” as well as the concept of “peaceful rising.”\textsuperscript{122} Depicting a more ambitious future plan, China is also “eager to strengthen its power” so that its voice can “be heard in international affairs” and thus it can “foster an image of a confident, constructive and responsible major global player.”\textsuperscript{123}

\textit{Ambiguity and Uncertainty}

Despite all those positive discourses portraying China as a “confident, constructive and responsible power,” there are still references that present an ambiguous picture leading to the uncertainty about China’s foreign behaviours in the future. First, since the generation of Deng Xiaoping, China has adopted a pragmatic instrumentalist approach to foreign policy. Realising its limited material capacity, China has often keep a “low-profile” in international affairs. Talking about China’s foreign policy, Deng addressed that “as for China, our strength is limited, as is our role,” and “China is just a member of the Third World and, as such, should discharge its own responsibilities.”\textsuperscript{124} Deng further indicated that China could not be the leader of the Third World, which was not “word of modesty,” but “out of genuine political consideration.”\textsuperscript{125} When China talks about its “due responsibility” as a “responsible power,” the current Chinese official discourses seem not to be as low-profile as they used to be. This lead to some ambiguity of its future policies as it is not clear with the changing international situation, whether China will withdraw from some of its international obligations under Deng’s maxim of “maintaining low-profile and never claiming leadership.” After all, Beijing in many occasions notes that it only shoulders its responsibility “to the best of its capacity.”

Second, much of the language that China uses to describe its international responsibility is neither very clear nor shows a firm attitude. Although it claims that it shoulders “broad international obligations,” China is less likely to articulate which

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
countries or issue towards which China has a responsibility and obligation. Even when it discusses its duties in bilateral or multilateral relations, China tends to use the term “shared responsibility” and “common responsibility.” Dealing with global issues, China often diverts a “special responsibility” to other major powers and claims “differentiated responsibility” for itself as a developing country. On the one hand, those discourses demonstrate China’s willingness to be involved into international cooperation and collective actions with an emphasis on global justice. On the other hand, China’s hesitation and reluctance to accept its international responsibility and offer global common good are also reflected by those ambiguities in the language.

Third, economic development in the past three decades has given China the material capacity and psychological advantages to shoulder more responsibility in international society. China tends to link the fulfillment of international duty with its economic development. Hu Jintao once addressed that “in the future, as China’s economy continues to develop, China will no doubt shoulder more responsibility for this cause.”126 Similarly, Wen Jiabao believed that “China’s economy will continue to grow fast and steadily,” and so he called for “confidence, cooperation and responsibility in overcoming the current global financial crisis.” 127 Those discourses have positioned China’s economic development as the pre-condition of being a “responsible power” without any explanation about what China would do if its national economy fails to develop at the current growth rate.

Finally, dealing with foreign relations, China “takes into account three demands: economic development, sovereignty and security and international responsibilities.”128 The first and second demands are “the incarnation of China’s national interests.”129 China suggests that it tries to “establish a balance between national interests and international responsibilities.” However, China also indicates that “preferential policies and policy adjustments” will prevail in emergencies, such as “an important domestic demand or an international crisis.” 130 Those discourses could easily cause other states’ to question

127 “PM Visit Europe,” p. 6.
129 Ibid.
130 Ibid., p. 12.
whether China would withdraw from its international duties and obligations when these could prevent China from realising its national interests. Therefore, China’s “responsible power” image in international society is still ambiguous and uncertain.

**Conclusion**

Based on a survey of *Beijing Review* from 1978 to 2010 with a probability sampling method, this chapter has conducted quantitative and qualitative studies on China’s official discourse on state responsibility as a responsible power in international society. The content analysis has revealed that China’s official understanding and interpretation of state responsibility has generally followed the trend of the evolving international standards represented by Rosemary Foot’s “three-phase responsibility.” From 1978 to 1995, the discourses about China’s national identity as a peace-loving country prevailed. In those discourses, China aimed to maintain regional stability, dedicated itself to establishing friendship and partnership with other states, respected the international norm of non-intervention and state sovereignty, equality and independence, and promoted the value of anti-hegemonism, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism. China’s state responsibility framed by those images and identities were similar to Foot’s state responsibility in the First Phase which emphasised compliance with the UN Charter, especially the norm of non-intervention. The frequency rates of the discourse in Phase One have maintained a relatively high level (about 30%) in recent years even though it has largely reduced during the past thirty years.

The middle of the 1990s witnessed the change of China’s official discourses from Foot’s Phase One to Phase Two which focused on state’s involvement and participation in international regime and compliance with international laws and norms in general. The statistics shows that the frequency rates in this phase has surpassed the frequency in Phase One by 1995, and has maintained as the dominant trend since. However, not every criterion in this phase has been completely fulfilled yet. China is more likely to emphasise its cooperative behaviours in foreign relations and its participation in international trade arrangements, instead of its compliance with international laws and norms. It remains to be seen whether or not China’s official discourse will put more emphasis on its
participation in international regime in general as a responsible power in the future.

The content analysis fails to identify a clear transition of China’s state responsibility from Phase Two to Phase Three. The frequency rates represented China’s attempts to be a “solidarist state,” which offers common goods to international society and which promotes the value of human rights and democracy, has increased only slightly and has remained at relatively low level (less than 10%). This content analysis may not be adequate to predict whether or not China would fulfil the newest international requirement of responsible state in Phase Three. According to the current statistics and the increase rate, nonetheless, it is not very likely that China could achieve that goal in a short time period. Yet, the statistics has demonstrated a growing trend of frequency in Phase Three which is largely reflected in China’s increasing willingness to shoulder international duties and obligations as an influential great power in international society.

The discourse analysis has considered three implications of China’s official discourse about state responsibility in international society as a responsible power. The normative language that China used to describe its international duty and obligation suggests an altruistic attitude towards world affairs as a necessary characteristic of a responsible power. On numerous occasions, China’s top political leaders have stated that China “ought to” shoulder international responsibility as a “big influential state” and a “responsible power” in different levels of foreign relations and various global issues. Meanwhile, those discourses also demonstrate China’s increasing confidence and ambition based on its “great power” and “responsible state” identity in world arena. China now is more likely to put itself at an equal position with other great powers, especially the United States, to share the responsibilities in international society. However, ambiguities still exist in those discourses which draw an uncertain picture of China’s image as a responsible power. With a pragmatic diplomatic tradition, China tends to divert “some responsibilities” to other states and “selectively participate” in international arrangements, such as nuclear non-proliferation and environmental issues, according to “China’s status and practical interests.” It can only undertake its international responsibilities with a balance and in consideration of its national interest. The way that China expresses to fulfil its international obligations has offered China a lot of space for political manoeuvre.
The discourse analysis, to some extent, can support the findings of the content analysis that China’s attempt to become a “responsible power” has experienced a transition from Foot’s Phase One to Phase Two. In the past ten years, the official discourse has been increasingly focusing on China’s responsibility in global issues, such as arms control, environmental protection, the world economy and UN peacekeeping, which matches Foot’s criterion of responsible state in Phase Two of contributing to the “core international society goal of international peace and security.” Also, the study has found some discourses that can demonstrate China’s willingness to offer global common goods by shouldering its international responsibilities. However, there are few discourses that emphasised China’s promotion of human security and democratic governance which are the essential standards of a responsible state in Phase Three. Therefore, it remains to be studied whether or not China can fulfil the newest international criteria of responsible power in the future.

For a further content analysis, future scholars could engage more China’s official publications beyond Beijing Review in both English and Chinese languages and obtain a even higher coverage rate. To make the results more accurate and robust future projects may invite more human coders and calculate the overlap rate. The future researchers on discourse analysis can survey the official discourses of “state responsibility” and “responsible power” of some other countries, especially the United States, to find out whether there exist any similar characteristics of “altruism, ambition and ambiguity” as what this study has found in China’s discourse. If certain similarity does exist, it may imply that the international standards of responsible state are difficult to be completely fulfilled for other states as much as for China. Therefore, whether the newest standards of responsible power can survive the “life cycle” and become a prevailing international norm still needs to be considered.

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131 This chapter does not discuss about China’s involvement in UN peacekeeping in discourse analysis. Nevertheless, the author has found many discourses about China’s peacekeeping in the process of data collection. For example, China’s former President Jiang Zemin addressed about international peacekeeping in his speech “Realizing the Lofty Ideal of Peace and Development” at the Summit of The UN Security Council on 7 September 2010. He stated that all members in the United Nations share “a primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security,” and “the peacekeeping operation constitutes one of the major means by which the United Nations fulfils its responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security.”

132 Foot, pp. 8-9.

The third chapter of this thesis has analysed China’s official discourses of state responsibility in international society. Yet, it is still uncertain whether China would behave in world affairs as exactly what it claims to be. The following two chapters will introduce two case-studies in order to examine China’s fulfilment of its international duties and obligations as a responsible power and how international norms and the expectations from international society obtained through China’s international socialisation has influenced China’s behaviours and its attempts to a “responsible-power” status.
Table 3  China’s official discourse of state responsibility and being a “responsible power” in international society-frequency and frequency rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Phase One: inter-state relations, the norm of non-intervention (frequency)</th>
<th>Phase Two: international regimes (frequency)</th>
<th>Phase Three: &quot;Solidarist&quot;-common good and values (frequency)</th>
<th>Frequency rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peace-loving, stability, friendship and partnership</td>
<td>State’s independence, equality, sovereignty, non-alignment and non-interference</td>
<td>Anti-hegemonism, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism</td>
<td>Participation in international organisations, regimes and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR

“Responsibility to Protect”? China’s Socialisation into International Norms of Human Rights and Democracy

Introduction

Since the December 2010 Tunisia protests, the Arab world has experienced a major wave of mass demonstrations, protests, strikes, marches and rallies. The participants of these on-going campaigns have pushed a list of political and economic grievances: demands for better employment prospects and living conditions, free elections, the end of authoritarian rule and respect for human rights. Known collectively as the “Arab Spring,” these protests and demonstrations across the Middle East and North Africa have overthrown the governments of four countries and precipitated pro-democratic political reform in others. As many regional changes which can destabilise the status quo, the “Arab Spring” has not been fully welcomed by the international community. Some western and democratic countries have supported the protestors’ goals of promoting liberties and civil rights; while other countries have expressed concerns about the governmental changes and their impact on regional stability. For example, France, the United Kingdom and the United States with ten other member states in the United Nations Security Council voted to support the draft resolution calling for the cessation of violence in Syria in 2012. On the other hand, Russia and China cast the negative votes arguing that the resolution would undermine Syria’s sovereignty and advocated a regime change instead of peaceful settlement.1

As an emerging power, China has been increasingly interacting in international society since the 1980s. Since the middle of the 1990s, China has sought to assure the international community in its official discourses that it has assumed a constructive role

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as a “responsible power” in international society. In recent years, the notion of full membership in international society as “responsible power” is increasingly reflected by a state’s subscription to the norms of “good governance” which includes ascribing to promotion of human rights and democratisation. Using a social constructivist approach, this chapter aims to examine China’s socialisation into international norm of human rights and democracy using the case of the “Arab Spring.” Borrowing some concepts from social psychology, this study regards China as a “norm novice,” and major western countries as the “norm entrepreneurs.” It observes and reveals the dynamic and process of norm diffusion from “entrepreneurs” to “novice.” It identifies entrepreneurs’ efforts of persuasion and exerting social influence on China, and China’s mimicking behaviours and self-identification as a novice in international society. It argues that China’s responses towards “Arab Spring” and the international advocates of human rights and democracy can be explained by its state socialisation in international society rather than a simple calculation of its material interests. However, when considering Chinese discourse and policy towards the developments in the Middle East due to “Arab Spring,” it is clear that China has not fully ascribed to international norms of human rights and democracy even where regime changes and regional systemic changes have had little impact of China’s political, economic and security interests. Nevertheless, this chapter argues that China has shown a more proactive approach towards the norm construction. Instead of being merely been a passive norm “accepter” or “learner” as a novice in international society, but it also has been a “norm maker” by promoting its own interpretation of human rights and democracy in the case of the “Arab Spring.”

This chapter investigates China’s socialisation in international society on Libya and Syria issues during “Arab Spring.” By observing China’s discourses and behaviours in the United Nations, especially in the UN Security Council, this study discusses China’s interaction with other members of UN Security Council over the issues related to human rights and democracy in Libya and Syria. In Libyan case, China abstained from the vote over authorising the Security Council “all necessary measures” to protect civilians, which

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did not prevent this draft resolution from being approved and thus provided the legal basis for international intervention in the conflict. This chapter argues that China as a “norm novice” to some extent has internalised the international norms of “norm entrepreneurs” and Chinese actions and attitudes towards the Libyan crisis suggests that it engaged in mimicking behaviours and identification mechanism which facilitated joint action with “peer states.” However, in the Syrian case China, along with Russia, cast a veto against the draft resolution of “ceasing all violence” effectively derailing Security Council efforts, spearheaded by western states to curtail the war. This study contends that the lack of social rewards for its Libya vote from the international society has made China very reluctant to comply again in Syria issue. Nevertheless, after the vote China has shown more skilful diplomatic manoeuvring by actively interacting with both Syrian government and Arab League. This diplomatic activity, from a social constructivist perspective can be seen as part of a strategy to neutralise the social punishment from the international society as well as an attempt to offer an alternative understanding of human rights and democracy different from the western norm – a decidedly more proactive role than merely a norm “accepter” – as it appears to be an attempt to re-evaluate and shape the international norms in the process of state socialisation. By those active attempts to influence the normative community, China may have provided a “China model” of “responsible power” in international society.

China and State Responsibility in Human Right and Democracy

The egregious violations of human rights and profound disregard for the tenets of liberal democracy before and during the Second World War made many states re-consider the state sovereign power and responsibility towards its own citizens and peoples within its territory. The United Nations served as the main “norm entrepreneur” to promote human rights and democracy in the early years after the war. In 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which emphasised an individual’s civil and political rights, as well as more the collective social

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and cultural rights.\textsuperscript{4} Despite the universalist orientation, membership in the UN Commission on Human Rights, which was charged with enforcing the UDHR, largely belonged to the Western countries before the 1960s.\textsuperscript{5} Moreover, the traditional international law principles of state sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs still remained and were widely supported by major states in the international system. The norm of human rights and democracy had not reached the “tipping point” to obtain a prescriptive status until the 1980s when countries increasingly joined the international human rights regime.\textsuperscript{6} Some countries started to adopt a more systematic approach to promoting the norm by incorporating the value of human rights and democracy into their foreign policy. For example, The Netherlands’ development assistance policy required that aid-recipient countries promote social justice.\textsuperscript{7} In this international normative dynamics of human rights and democracy, state interests and practices have been redefined in the socialisation process.\textsuperscript{8}

The Chinese traditional ethical framework represented by Confucianism highlights the value of the individual as a part of a larger community and limited individual freedom to serve for the good deed (ren \textsuperscript{9}). With this legal tradition influenced by social collectivism and moral obligations, “individual rights” or “political freedom” were foreign concepts.\textsuperscript{10} Since the 1970s when human rights, democratisation and economic liberalisation became the dominant themes of policy-making, the international society started to socialise China into the human rights regime.\textsuperscript{11} The early socialisation involves much “social punishment” or opprobrium on China’s human rights record and practices.


\textsuperscript{5} Before 1960, countries in the Western world including nine Western European countries, Australia and the United States, took more than a quarter in terms of the membership in the Commission of Human Rights (Not clear). See The United Nations, Commission on Human Rights, membership \url{http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/chr/membership.htm} accessed on 10 March 2013.

\textsuperscript{6} According to Finnemore and Sikkink, norm tipping cannot occur until at least one-third of the states in the international system adopt the norm. See Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change.” \textit{International Organisation}, Vo. 52, No. 4 (1998), p. 901.

\textsuperscript{7} Foot, Rights beyond Board, p. 48.


\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., pp. 3-4.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid. p. 17.
Since 1979, the United States Department of State has published annual reports on human rights which often mention China as a country with poor human rights record. \(^{12}\) Meanwhile, some human rights organisations also showed their interest in China’s human rights performance.\(^ {13}\) Starting from the early 1980s, China has signed and ratified a series of human rights treaties relating to genocide, refugees, apartheid, torture, women, race, economic and social rights, and civil and political rights.\(^ {14}\) Yet despite these international commitments, the differences between Chinese domestic human rights policy and its policy and rhetorical commitments to human rights in its foreign policy as a member of international society remains. Domestically, Chinese official interpretation of human rights is quite different with that of many Western countries. The Chinese government prioritises economic and social rights, while Western countries emphasise civil and political rights.\(^ {15}\) This chapter does not intend to discuss China’s human rights policy in domestic context. Instead, it aims to explore the topic under the framework of state socialisation and global governance.

Previous studies using constructivist and state socialisation approaches have provided insight into China’s increasing participation in the international regime of human rights and democracy. Ann Kent argues that multilateral monitoring, which enjoys “collective, consensual, historical, and institutionally based moral authority” contributed heavily to China’s gradual acceptance of the “custom-based and historically evolved” human rights norms.\(^ {16}\) She finds that international organisations and their treaties, as multilateralism platforms, have persuaded China to explore and redefine national interests in many issues areas and subjected China to the process of international socialisation.\(^ {17}\) Yongjin Zhang’s research demonstrates that China’s political socialisation into international norms of


human rights is rooted in China’s desire to be a responsible great power in the international society since human rights and democracy has become global common values after the Cold War. He argues that China’s state socialisation has resulted in its gradual conformity with human rights norms and active participation in the international human rights regime.

Highlighting the importance of state socialisation to China’s compliance with international norms, those studies however, have not depicted a full picture of the dynamic process of socialisation and how it influences China’s interpretation of "responsible power” and its behaviours in international affairs. Titus Chen’s PhD thesis discusses the process by which China has been socialised into international norms of human rights and the rule of law. He hypothesises international normative pressure of human rights on China as the independent variable, and the China’s socialisation as the dependent variable. Chen attempts to establish a causal relationship between these two variables by focusing on two types of events: China’s bilateral human rights dialogues and China’s domestic legal institution reform. He also engages an intervening viable, ie, the Chinese elite’s perception of regime security and argues that elite perceptions of security can largely influence the efficacy of China’s normative engagement in international regimes. Chen’s research reveals the dynamic socialisation process that involves the interaction between China as a “norm novice” and the Western democracies as “norm entrepreneurs.” It emphasises the significance of social influence imposed on China from the international society in the socialisation process.

Instead of stressing the influence of the international social expectation some studies have interpreted China’s interaction with the international regime of human rights and democracy from the perspective of China’s domestic demand. Concentrating on Titus Chen’s intervening variable, Chen Dingding argues that Chinese political leaders’

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19 Ibid, p. 126 and p. 182.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., p. 160.
23 Ibid., especially see the case of European Commission and China’s bilateral dialogue, pp. 188-191.
changing perceptions of state identity from “revolutionary state” to “modern socialist state” in the late 1970s has led to an expanded participation in the international regime of human rights.\textsuperscript{24} There is much discussion about China’s attempt to be responsible power based on the standpoint of China’s emerging national identity of “responsible great power.”\textsuperscript{25} By observing China’s engagement with the international norm of humanitarian intervention, Pak Lee and his associates have demonstrated China’s more proactive role in the process of norm diffusion and the competing natures of different norms. Their study finds that in the case of humanitarian intervention in Darfur, China’s policy has not merely been driven by its domestic energy security needs, but also exhibits China’s attempt to be a “rule-maker” of “conditional intervention” that emphasises the host country’s sovereignty, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and the constructive role of regional organisations and the UN.\textsuperscript{26} This new scholarship has shed light on how China as an emerging power and “novice” of humanitarian intervention norm can exert some influence on the normative community in terms of shaping and redefining the norm. According to the studies of social psychology and management, the socialisation process can generate “mutual influence” between socialiser and socialisee.\textsuperscript{27}

For the first two decades after China’s Reforming and Opening Up, state socialisation scholarship focused on China’s compliance with the existing international norms. This one-directional process reflected the concerns of international society about China’s rise and its implications to the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{28} However, as it has become a major economic actor and gained more material power, the issue of how China would use the power and shape the evolution of the international norms has not been fully explored.\textsuperscript{29} Therefore, in order to tell “both sides of the story,” China’s socialisation into the norm of

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., pp.4-7.
“responsible power” should be studied from a “two-way” approach that includes China’s conformity with the norm and China’s attempts to influence the normative community and shape the norm.

The Case of Libya

Libyan civil war started with anti-government protests for human rights and democracy on 15 February 2011 in several major cities, such as Benghazi.\(^30\) The protests soon escalated and spread nation-wide with the establishment of interim government-National Transitional Council by the forces opposing Colonel Muammar Gaddafi’s regime.\(^31\) Despite the initial success of the anti-government forces, Gaddafi’s supporters took back several cities of Mediterranean coast.\(^32\) The rising casualties and violence in the civil war caused great concern in the international community. The Gaddafi regime was condemned for human rights violations and for resisting democratic reforms. There were calls for the dissolution of Gaddafi’s government.\(^33\) Led by NATO, a military coalition of European and Middle East states intervened in Libya by air attacks in March 2011 against Gaddafi forces.\(^34\) On 16 September 2011, the United Nations recognised the National Transitional Council as the legal representative of Libya to replace Gaddafi’s government.\(^35\) Muammar Gaddafi was captured and killed on 20 October 2011.\(^36\) Three days later, National Transitional Council declared the liberation of Libya and the end of the civil war.\(^37\)

The United Nations, especially Security Council played an essential role in resolving the Libyan crisis and assisting the country’s transition to a new government. From February 2011 to December 2012, the UN Security Council adopted seven resolutions


\(^{31}\) Ibid.


\(^{33}\) Ibid.

\(^{34}\) Ibid.

\(^{35}\) UN General Assembly, 66\(^{th}\) Session, 2\(^{nd}\) Meeting. “After Much Wrangling, General Assembly Seats National Transitional Council of Libya as Country’s Representative for Sixty-sixth Session” (GA/11137), 16 September 2011.


related to the situation in Libya (Table 4). Among those resolutions, resolution 1973 (2011) was the most controversial. It authorised member states to “take all necessary measures…to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack” in Libya.\textsuperscript{38} China did not utilise it veto in the Council to prevent these resolutions which was a relatively dramatic shift in position: China has supported the traditional conventions of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, and normally has not approved any international arrangement that can lead to regime change.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{38} UN Security Council, 6498\textsuperscript{th} Meeting, “Security Council Approves ‘No-fly Zone’ over Libya, Authorizing ‘All Necessary Measures’ to Protect Civilians, by Vote of 10 in Favour with 5 Abstentions” (SC/10200), 17 March 2011. \textsuperscript{39} China did not cast any negative votes to the seven draft resolutions in UN Security Council. For resolution 1973 (2011), China abstained along with other four countries (including Brazil, Germany, India and Russia); while it voted in favour for the rest of six resolutions For the official records of the six resolutions, refer to the document of UN Security Council S/PV.6491, S/PV.6498, S/PV.6620, S/PV.6640, S/PV.6644, S/PV.6673, and S/PV.6733.
Table 4  UN Security Council’s votes for draft resolutions about the situation in Libya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resolution</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Main Content</th>
<th>Favour</th>
<th>Against</th>
<th>Abstention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970 (2011)</td>
<td>26/02/11</td>
<td>Condemnation of the human right violation in Libya and imposing the international sanctions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973 (2011)</td>
<td>17/03/11</td>
<td>Establishment of a no-fly zone over Libya and taking all necessary measure to protect civilians</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(Brazil, China, Germany, India and Russia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 (2011)</td>
<td>16/09/11</td>
<td>Decision to establish UN Support Mission in Libya, and exceptions of arms embargo and asset freeze</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 (2011)</td>
<td>27/10/11</td>
<td>Termination of paragraph 4 and 5 (taking all necessary measure to protect civilian) of resolution 1973 (2011)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 (2011)</td>
<td>31/10/11</td>
<td>Requirement on interim authorities to prevent arms proliferation from Libya</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 (2011)</td>
<td>02/12/11</td>
<td>Extended authorisation for UN Support Mission in Libya till 16 March 2012</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040 (2012)</td>
<td>12/03/12</td>
<td>Extension for Support Mission in Libya for additional 12 months</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Except for the five permanent members, the non-permanent members of UN Security Council in 2011 were Gabon, Nigeria, South Africa, Lebanon, India, Brazil, Columbia, Germany, Portugal and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and in 2012 they were Morocco, Togo, South Africa, Pakistan, India, Guatemala, Columbia, Germany, Portugal and Azerbaijan.

**Limited Domestic Drive for China’s Votes in Libya Issues**

Domestic politics, to some extent, can often exert some influence on foreign policy making. China is not an exception. After its Reforming and Opening Up, China’s foreign relations have been increasingly shaped by domestic factors including public opinion, mass media, interest groups and think tanks. In the case of Libya, China vote in favour for most of the resolutions and its abstention on the draft resolution 1973 (2011) cleared the legal obstacles to the international interventions led by Western countries. However, it is unlikely that China’s UN Security Council votes reflected any strong domestic interests or was the result of domestic factors. First, it was not Chinese government’s interest to cast votes in favour or abstention in Libya issues which could be perceived as supporting the “Arab Spring” by the domestic public. The disconcertion the Middle Eastern events must have created for the Chinese leadership is reflected by the fact that the government controlled Chinese media did not provide any substantial reporting about “Arab Spring” to the Chinese public until March 2011. Although BBC global poll in December 2011 shows that 50% of Chinese citizens surveyed believed that the protests of “Arab Spring” were “a good thing,” Chinese government has always been alert to the popular uprising overseas on issues such as human rights and democracy and its possible implications for China. After the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, a primary element of Chinese domestic policy is to secure domestic stability as part of the response to international events such as those which occurred in the Arab Spring.

Since February 2011, there has been several “Jasmine” protests in several major Chinese cities to extend the spirit of “Arab Spring.” To prevent a further “Jasmine Revolution” in China, the Chinese government tightened internet monitoring and the control of public gatherings and demonstrations. Considering of Chinese government’s fear that “colour revolution” might undermine China’s internal stability, it would follow that a Chinese vote against the resolutions based

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40 For example, *China Daily* (digital edition) first reported about “Arab Spring” on 4 March 2011; *People’s Daily* (digital edition) had the first report on “Arab Spring” on 25May 2011; *China Youth Daily* (digital edition) had it on 22 March 2011; and *PLA Daily*’s (digital edition) first report was on 9 August 2011.


42 Bruce Gilley, “Could China Be the Next Wave?” *Current History*, November 2011, p. 332.


on the principle of non-interference would have been the usual policy course.

Second, China always exhibits concern over external interventions into domestic affairs of other sovereign states and generally holds a Westphalian view of state sovereignty in its foreign relations.45 Suffering from “victim culture” which has resulted from China’s “Century of Humiliation,” both the Chinese government and people are particularly sensitive to foreign interference within its territory.46 This long-standing domestic norm of sovereignty and non-intervention certainly does not support China’s failure to veto Resolution 1973 (2011). Moreover, due to its own emerging Tibet and Xinjiang separatist movements, which may require violent measures to suppress at times, it would be reasonable to presume that Chinese policy-makers would seek to avoid a precedent for foreign involvement into internal conflicts based on civilian protection, particularly those premised on human rights and democratic reform.47

Third, the Chinese government’s response to the Libyan Arab Spring has not been widely supported by the domestic public, especially the nationalists. With increasing pluralisation and decentralisation in Chinese policy making, Chinese political elite cannot totally ignore the public opinion in China’s foreign relations. Chinese popular nationalism has criticised China’s foreign policy as being “too soft” and is eager to see a more assertive China in international society.48 Although China emphasised that its abstention from the voting on Resolution 1973 (2011) was due to the “special circumstance surrounding the situation in Libya,”49 this abstention was still considered by nationalists as a “compromise” that Chinese government unnecessarily made due to Western pressure.50 The Chinese public expressed its disappointment over China’s compliance in Libyan issues through a variety of internet forums, blogs and BBS. Many comments suggested that by allowing Western military intervention in Libya, China’s abstention to

the vote showed its weakness towards international pressure and undermined China’s national interest in Libya.\(^5\)

Finally, although domestic economic or developmental concerns often can influence China’s foreign behaviour, China’s votes in UN Security Council for Libya issues did not materially advance its economic interests. China had established significant economic (bilateral trade, including China’s purchase of petroleum, overseas contracting projects, and FDI) relationships with Libya under the Gaddafi’s government. The regime change in Libya facilitated by the external military intervention which occurred subsequent to Resolution 1973 (2011) has cost China approximately USD $20 billion in lost investments, trade and material.\(^\text{52}\) Moreover, China and Libya under Gaddafi’s ruling had a long-time cooperative relationship which sought to extend Chinese economic and political influence and opportunities in North Africa. In April 2002, Jiang Zemin, the former President of China, paid a state visit to Libya. Both countries agreed that “Jiang’s visit is a major event of special importance in the history of bilateral relations and provides an opportunity for bilateral cooperation in the new century.”\(^\text{53}\) Although Chinese official discourse has already changed its positive tone about Gaddafi and his government, a lot of Chinese people still consider Gaddafi as “China’s old friend.”\(^\text{54}\) Based on the bilateral economic relations and traditional political ties between China and Libya, the failure to cast a veto against Resolution 1973 (2011) and the tacit acceptance or support for external intervention in the overthrow of the Gaddafi government is a rather dramatic departure from previous policy.

\(^{51}\) This criticism from the Chinese public can be largely found on Internet. For example, see “Cong Libiya jushi kan zhongguo de waijiao ruanruo” 从利比亚局势看中国的外交软弱[China’s weak foreign policy reflected on Libya situation]. BBS, Gateway to China (中华网论坛), 20 March 2011. http://club.china.com/data/thread/1011/2723/83/297_1.html accessed on 10 April 2013. Also see “Mei ying fa kongxi libiya, zhongguo liyi bei wuqing jianta” 美英法空袭利比亚，中国利益被无情践踏 [The United States, United Kingdom and France launched air attacks to Libya. China’s interest has been violated ruthlessly]. Xilu (西陆网), 13 April 2011. http://junshi.xilu.com/2011/0412/news_340_152331.html accessed on 10 April 2013.


\(^{54}\) The discussion about whether Gaddafi is a friend of China can be found in some Chinese BBS. For example, “Jinian zhongguo renmin de laopengyou kazhafei” 纪念中国人民的老朋友卡扎菲[Commemorate Chinese old friend Gaddafi]. BBS, Gateway to China (中华网论坛), 21 March 2011. http://club.china.com/data/thread/1011/2732/89/103_1.html accessed on 8 April 2013. However, in recent China’s official discourses, Chinese government does not recognise Gaddafi a “Chinese old friend” any more.
State Socialisation and China’s Votes in Libya Issues

Having eliminated the salient domestic factors (material and non-material) that could contribute to China’s cooperative attitude towards Libya Arab Spring, this study adopts a social constructivist approach and hypothesises that China’s state socialisation in international society has exposed China into a normative community which advocates a state responsibility in promoting human rights and democracy as a responsible member of international society. By tracking the dynamic micro-process of state socialisation (persuasion, social influence, identification and mimicking), this chapter argues that expectations from international society and the international standard of “responsible power” have influenced China’s understanding of state responsibility and shaped its foreign behaviours in Libya.

Resolution 1970 (2011)

Before the UN Security Council adopted the first resolution on the Libyan civil war on 26 February 2011, the international community had more or less reached a consensus that the violation of human rights norms in Libya should be stopped immediately. One day before the voting for Resolution 1970 (2011) in Security Council, the UN Human Rights Council passed a European-drafted resolution which expressed a deep concern over civilian casualties in Libya which it noted had been caused by “the highest level of the Libyan Government.”55 The Resolution also emphasised that a state has an obligation to protect its own civilian population and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.56 The major powers in the world also individually showed their support and ascription to for human rights norms in terms of Libya issues. Before the voting, Eileen Donahoe, the ambassador of the United States in UN Human Rights Council stated that Libya had the “responsibility to protect its population,” but failed to do so.57 And thus the international community should send “a strong, unified and clear message that the Libyan

56 Ibid.
government’s violations of human rights are clearly contrary to international norms and must end.”  

At the Security Council session on 24 February 2011, Britain’s UN ambassador, Mark Grant, urged his colleagues from other Council countries to exert more pressure on the Libyan government to protect human rights. Using normative language, these Western states acting as norm entrepreneurs framed the Libyan civil war under the international norm of human rights. At the same time as part of this framing process, the entrepreneurs suggested what should be the appropriate response of responsible members of the international community to such atrocities – humanitarian intervention and internationally supported regime change. As “novices” within the society as ascribing to the Westphalian norms of territorial integrity and non-interference, both China and Russia indicated that they expected more information from UN secretariat before they made the decision in this Security Council session. The next day on 25 February 2011, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon briefed the Security Council. After discussing the situation in detail he observed that political leaders “must respect fundamental human rights,” and argued “when it comes to democracy and free elections, the people’s will must prevail.” The Secretary General also pointed out that many international leaders and organisations the supported “fundamental human rights” and called for the “immediate end of the violence” in Libya. As an authority figure in international community and as a symbol of the international community, Ban’s briefing not only provided more credible information but used stronger normative language (“must”) and identified the human rights norm as a fundamental principle of the international society. These communicative actions served as persuasive devices to socialise member states, and could also exert social influence on them by articulating the expectation from the normative society.

On 26 February 2012, Resolution 1970 (2011) was adopted with all the 15 member

58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
states in Security Council in favour. After the positive vote, China’s UN ambassador stated that “it is of the greatest urgency to secure the immediate cessation of violence, avoid further bloodshed and civilian casualties, restore stability and normal order as soon as possible, and resolve the current crisis through peaceful means...”\textsuperscript{63} In the statements after the voting, the term “human rights” was mentioned 14 times by almost all the member states (including Russia) and the Secretary-General.\textsuperscript{64} However, Ambassador Li did not use the term in his speech. Instead of promoting the international norm of human rights and freedoms, Li maintained that China favoured the resolution because of the “special situation in Libya” and the “concerns and views of the Arab and African countries.”\textsuperscript{65} Therefore, China’s compliant behaviour in Resolution 1970 (2011) was more likely the result of social influence from international society than one based on the changed preference resulting from persuasion. According to Johnston, the growing size of the reference group or the number of other cooperative can amplify the effect of social influence.\textsuperscript{66} When all the other states in Security Council, including Russia, South Africa and India which often share similar views on the Council, supported the resolution, China could hardly resist this social influence from international community.\textsuperscript{67} As a matter of fact, in the history of its participation in UN Security Council, China has only cast three negative votes as the sole veto, and two of them were related to Taiwan issue which China considers as the “core national interest.”\textsuperscript{68}

\textit{Resolution 1973 (2011)}

When the human rights situation in Libya deteriorated as Gaddafi’s government employed ruthless forces against opponents and civilians in March 2011, the international society showed addition concern in the United Nations. At the 65\textsuperscript{th} session of the UN

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., pp. 2-8.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., p.4.
General Assembly, the member states discussed a draft resolution suspending Libya’s membership in UN Human Rights Council on 1 March 2011. In recommending the Human Rights Council to suspend Libya’s membership, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted “the international community must stand firm” to support the request of people in the Middle East in demanding “new rights and new freedoms,” and that international society had the “collective duty to stand for human right, social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.” In the statements that several member states explaining their respective positions on suspending Libya from the Council, the objectives of promoting human rights and the responsibility to protect were given as the main reasons why they supported the resolution. For example, the American representative, Ms Rice, pointed out that the favourable vote was about “the universal human rights” in Libya since the Libyan government had “failed to meet its responsibility to protect its own population.” Despite the dominant discourse, China and Russia did not seek to use this normative “human rights” justification for their votes. China simply expressed that it “joined the consensus” and hoped that this case would not “become a precedent.” This attitude in General Assembly suggests that the normative persuasion and framing of the Libyan crisis from the international community did not fundamentally change China’s views and preferences on human rights issues and state responsibility to protect. Nevertheless, facing the social influence from norm entrepreneurs, China complied with the resolution by mimicking other member states’ behaviour in order to “join the consensus” instead of “rocking the boat.”

Before the discussion of the draft resolution, major powers in international society had expressed their willingness to intervene in the civil war to prevent more civilian casualties. British Prime Minister Cameron revealed that Britain was collaborating with its military allies on plans for a military no-fly zone. Britain also encouraged “clear international support” on the no-fly zone from those “who believed in democracy and...”

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69 UN General Assembly, 65th Session, Summary (A/66/PV.76), official records, 1 March 2011, p. 3.
70 Ibid. at p. 2.
71 Ibid., p. 7.
72 Ibid., p. 18.
open societies.” Later, at an EU emergency summit on Libya and North Africa, France called for targeted air strikes against Gaddafi’s forces if they used any chemical weapons or launched air strikes against civilians. And Britain supported this request by submitting a joint letter with France demanding “Gaddafi and his clique to leave.” The United States indicated that it would be possible to impose a no-fly zone in Libya to prevent Gaddafi from bombarding his own people. And President Obama stated that the United States would be well-prepared with the “full capacity to act” in case there would be a humanitarian crisis in Libya. He explicitly pointed out that the capacity to act included taking military action in concert with other countries. When those “normative powers” were reaching a consensus of intervening Libya by force, the Arab League also called on UN Security Council for a no-fly zone in Libya.

Nevertheless, some countries also had concerns over the possible consequences of military intervention and no-fly zone in Libya. A divergence of opinion was revealed in the Group of Eight meeting under France’s presidency in March 2011. Germany strongly disapproved of the air strikes against Gaddafi’s forces proposed by Britain and France. German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle stated that “military intervention is not the solution. From our point of view it is very difficult and dangerous.” Russia also expressed doubts about a no-fly zone and requested “more specific information” from Arab League before they considered it a viable option. The United States also called on the Arab League to provide more clarity on what no-fly zone would entail. Additionally Brazil opposed military measures to solve Libya issues and preferred a peaceful solution.

74 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
without foreign intervention.\textsuperscript{84} One day before the voting on draft Resolution of Resolution1973, the Indian ambassador questioned the implementation and sponsorship of the no-fly zone in UN Security Council.\textsuperscript{85}

In the case of Libya, the international norm of human rights was competing with the traditional rules of state sovereignty and non-intervention. In this contested normative environment, China could neither ignore the state’s new responsibilities in human rights nor its older commitment to sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference. In this context, China was receiving persuasion and social influence from the “normative states” to uphold the international norm of human rights in Libya. China desired to avoid international isolation in the UN.\textsuperscript{86} If China embraced the state responsibility in promoting human rights, the possible social reward would be the acceptance of status in the “normative states club.” Yet, its continued support of state sovereignty and territorial integrity and the possible precedent which a Libyan intervention might create made it very reluctant to join in or support a military intervention. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said in a news conference that “in the decision-making process, we believe, Libya’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence should be respected.”\textsuperscript{87} Nonetheless, the discourse analysis finds that even though they were not willing to support military intervention or questioned the efficiency of no-fly zone, Germany, Russia, Brazil and Indian did not engage in any debates about the necessity to promote human rights in Libya or the fundamental freedom to which the Libyan people were entitled. The norm of human rights still enjoyed great popularity in the international society. Under this circumstance, China could hardly employ its veto power against the draft resolution.

On 17 March 2011, before the voting for the draft resolution in UN Security Council, French Ambassador Juppé addressed in a strong normative language why support for the

draft resolution was consistent with the will of the international community and state
responsibility. He stated that “we must not give free rein to warmongers; we must not
abandon civilian populations, the victims of brutal repression, to their fate; we must not
allow the rule of law and international morality to be trampled underfoot.”

In the following vote China abstained together with Brazil, Germany, Indian and Russia. The
Chinese UN ambassador Li Baodong explained China’s position in the Resolution 1973
(2011) observing that China respected the sovereignty and independence of Libya and it
preferred the peaceful solution, and thus could not contribute a positive vote. However,
Ambassador Li stated that considering the request of Arab League and African Union,
China did not use the power of veto, either.

Unlike many other countries (such as Russia, Brazil, South Africa and the United
States) whose statements emphasised the significance of the norm of human rights and
rule of law, China did not seem to be fully convinced by the normative persuasion, it
particularly pointed out its Libya vote was due to the “special circumstances” in order to
not to create a precedent. Indeed, the PRC perhaps more than other states, has been
committed to the conventional rule of non-intervention and state sovereignty, despite the
temper and quality of the particular international crisis since it entered the UN in the
1970s. For example, regarding Iraq’s non-compliance with UN Special Commission in
1997, China not only stressed the importance of Iraq’s cooperation but responded that the
“sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity” of Iraq “should also be respected.”

In Kosovo crisis of 1998, China repeatedly stated in the UN Security Council that the
sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia should be
respected.

Consistent with the long-standing policy of upholding Westphalian principles of
sovereignty and non-interference, China could have been expected to veto any attempt at

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89 Ibid., p. 10.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
2013.
military intervention in Libya. Additionally, there was no clear external material incentive or any Chinese domestic factors to support Resolution 1973 (2011). As such, it is likely that China’s abstention vote was due to social influence it received from the international society. With the growing membership or size of the group, the distribution of social rewards and punishments can increasingly influence a novice state and lead to more pro-group behaviours.\(^9^4\) Since most of the member states in UN Security Council, especially three out of five permanent members (Britain, France, and the United States), had showed their support to establishing a no-fly zone in Libya and resorting to military measures to protect human rights, China felt constrained to insist on the rules of sovereignty and non-intervention. Although it expressed its concerns over the proposal, Russia did not strongly oppose the draft resolution and seemed unlikely to use the power of veto. Without the collaboration of Russia, China could become the sole veto if it cast the negative vote. As China neither wanted to be the only target of social punishment nor was convinced by the normative persuasion; therefore it chose to abstain from the vote in resolution 1973 (2011).

**The Other Five Resolutions about Libya Issues**

From September 2011 to December 2012, there were another five resolutions about the situation in Libya approved by the UN Security Council. All five resolutions were adopted unanimously by the 15 member states. The normative community continued advocating international norms of human rights, rule of law and representative democracy in Libya. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe addressed the UN Security Council in May 2011 about post-conflict peace-building. He stressed six areas that should be given priority in the post-conflict period, including “rule of law and human rights.”\(^9^5\) In UN Security Council meeting with African Union in June 2011, the representative of African Union emphasised the Union’s commitment to a political solution in Libya that could support Libyan people’s “aspirations for democracy, the rule

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\(^9^5\) UN Security Council, 6541\(^b\) Meeting, “The situation in Libya” (S/PV.6541) 31 May 2011, p. 5.
of law and respect for human rights.” The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya Ian Martin also spoke in the Security Council and repeatedly highlighted the significance of human rights protection. He expected a new Libya to “build a modern nation-State based on the principles embraced by the revolution – democracy, human rights, the rule of law, accountability, the respect for minority rights, the empowerment of women and the promotion of civil society.”

Besides the UN and some regional organisations, major powers in the world also played important roles in promoting the international norm of human rights and democracy in Libya. After voting in support of Resolution 2009 (2011) about establishing a National Transitional Council in Libya, the representative of Britain stated that the Council would help the Libyan people to “promote and protect human rights.” The Russian delegate requested a thorough investigation of all facts “related to human rights violations during the conflict in Libya” and believed that the Security Council “must also focus on the pressing problems in the human rights sphere.” The French ambassador noted that the United Nations Support Mission should help the Libyan people to “build the institutions of a democratic and free State that respects human rights and the rule of law.” Germany also considered the protection of human rights in Libya critical. The United States expressed its support for the Libyan people to “restore order and bring about democracy.” Experiencing the normative persuasion and social influence from the international community, China voted in favour for all the five resolutions.

**Social Influence and Its Insufficiency**

Nevertheless, China’s “mimicking” behaviour in voting did not mean that it was truly satisfied with or ascribed to the international norm of human rights and democracy nor does it suggest that it was ready to fully internalise the norms. Rather China has interpreted and reframed the international norm of human rights and democracy in a

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96 UN Security Council, 6555th Meeting, “The situation in Libya” (S/PV.6555) 15 June 2011, p. 4.
97 UN Security Council, 6639th Meeting, “The situation in Libya” (S/PV.6639) 26 October 2011, p. 3.
98 UN Security Council, 6620th Meeting, “The situation in Libya” (S/PV.6620) 16 September 2011, p. 2.
99 Ibid., p. 3.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid., p. 4.
102 Ibid.
different way from many Western countries. First, China supports the international norm of human rights and democracy in general, but insists that the principles of state sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs must be upheld and in most instances should take priority. In the case of Libya, China repeatedly stated in UN Security Council that any action to protect civilians “must comply with the purposes and principles of…non-interference in countries’ international affairs and of respect for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of States.”103 Second, China prefers political and peaceful solutions to foreign military intervention based on protecting citizens, promoting human rights and rule of law. China believes that the “primary responsibility to protect civilians from violence and the scourge of war” rests on the shoulder of the national government rather than any external forces.104 And China particularly opposes the regime change caused by foreign intervention even where it serves a humanitarian purpose.105 Third, China often casts doubt on the objectivity and fairness of applying the norm of human rights and rule of law. For example in Libya, China advocated that “the practice of selectivity and double standards must be abandoned.”106 It requested that the Security Council “pay equal attention to all items on the Council’s agenda” not just Libyan issues but also other regional and international issues based on the “principles of fairness and impartiality.”107 These differences have made it more difficult for the international norm to pass through China’s “domestic filter” and be localised in China.

So what explains China’s tacit support for humanitarian intervention and regime change in Libya? In the absence of coercion and not completely convinced by the normative community, China nevertheless still complied with international human rights norm because it expected to gain some social reward and tried to avoid the possible social punishment from the international society. However, the responses of the international community about China’s compliance were far from China’s expectations. Ironically


107 UN Security Council, 6650th Meeting, “Protection of civilians in armed conflict” (S/PV.6650) 9 November 2011, p. 25.
China harvested more punishment than reward, both materially and socially and it suffered significant economic loss not only during the Libya civil war itself, but also under the leadership of the National Transitional Council (NTC). There were about 75 Chinese companies operating in Libya before the civil war with about 36,000 staff and 50 projects.\(^{108}\) China requested NTC to protect its economic interests, especially oil interests in 2011.\(^ {109}\) However, according to the NTC oil company AGOCO’s media announcement, they “don't have a problem with western countries like Italians, French and UK companies,” but they “may have some political issues with Russia, China and Brazil.”\(^ {110}\)

Beside the material cost, China received little social reward from international society for its compliance and tacit support, which largely reduced the positive impact of social influence. First, according to its UN statements, China’s cooperative attitude in the seven UN resolutions was mostly out due to its consideration and support of neighbouring Arab states, especially concerning UN sanctions and no-fly zone. Nevertheless, neither the Arab states nor the NTC showed much appreciation to China’s abstention in Resolution 1973 (2011); an action which China believed directly cleared the road for NATO’s military intervention in Libya.\(^ {111}\) Yet NTC and neighbour Arab states exhibited gratitude to the Western countries.\(^ {112}\) Second, as the last member of the UN Security Council to recognise the NTC as Libya’s ruling authority on September 2011, it received little if any social benefit.\(^ {113}\) The belated recognition was perceived by the new Libya government as the rejection of its “democratic movement.”\(^ {114}\) Third, the Western “normative powers” did not express any recognition of China’s tacit support nor did they

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110 Kovalyova and Farge.
111 Sun, “Syria: What China Has Learned from Its Libya Experience.”
114 Sun, “Syria: What China Has Learned from Its Libya Experience.”
seemingly appreciate it departure from its previous foreign policy principles. Instead, most of them continued to regard China as an “irresponsible power” because it did not uphold the principle of “responsibility of protect” by contributing to the military intervention. They believed that a consensus of humanitarian intervention was undermined because of the abstentions from China and the other four countries. And they argued that Beijing was concerned about its own interest and it actions were aimed at limiting the potentiality that the western doctrine of “liberal humanitarian intervention” might be applied in China in the future. Finally, the Chinese government received much opprobrium from domestic nationalists who criticised Beijing for compromising the non-interference principle and not resist the demands of the Western powers. Internationally, critics joined the Chinese nationalists, questioning China’s independent foreign policy and queried whether China was able to manage the pressure from the West. In sum, tacit acceptance of humanitarian intervention due to the socialisation in international society was unsuccessful and ungratifying because of the lack of material or social rewards for its cooperation. China, in a word of a senior diplomat, gained “nothing while losing everything in Libya.”

The Case of Syria

China failed to improve its image as a “responsible power” through its Libya votes. On the contrary, with regard to international standard of “responsible power” to promote human rights and representative democracy, China’s compliance or lack of opposition in the Libyan situation did not receive any “back-patting” from the normative community.

117 Ibid.
120 Sun.
This insufficiency of social influence has greatly affected China’s policy choices in Syria issues.

As a part of the Middle East protest movement “Arab Spring,” the anti-government demonstrations in Syria started on 26 January 2011. There were initially uneventful. However, violent conflicts between protestors and the government forces began on 15 March 2011 and soon spread nation-wide. The protestors, claiming legitimacy in the name of the Syrian people demanded that President al-Assad resign. The Assad Government denying the domestic basis of the protests claimed that it was fighting an insurrection “involving foreign backed ‘terrorists’.”

The battle between Syrian government’s security forces and the rebel army escalated in late 2011. As of February 2013, an estimated 70,000 people have died in the conflict, about half of whom are civilians. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has defined the clashes in Syria as “non-international armed conflict” (civil war), and thus Geneva Conventions should be applied to the situation of Syria.

The Syrian government’s mass violation of human rights has caused significant concern in the international community. The UN investigator announced that the Syrian government had committed war crimes including “murder and torture of civilians in what appears to be state-directed policy,” and the government’s abuses had “greater number and bigger variety” than rebel abuses. The UN Security Council launched three draft resolutions on Syria in 2011 and 2012 (see Table 5). Russia and China vetoed all of them and also cast negative votes at the UN General Assembly and UN Human Rights Council. However, in 2013 China demonstrated a more cooperative posture towards Syrian issues. This section explains China’s foreign behaviours in the Syrian crisis by focusing on

China’s state socialisation into the international norm of human rights and democracy and how China perceives state responsibility in human rights.

Table 5  UN Security Council’s votes for draft resolutions about the situation in Syria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft Resolution</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Main Content</th>
<th>Favour</th>
<th>Against</th>
<th>Abstention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S/2011/612</td>
<td>04/10/11</td>
<td>Condemnation of Syrian government’s violation of human rights, and demand to end the use of force against civilians</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2 (China and Russia)</td>
<td>4 (Brazil, India, Lebanon and South Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/2012/77</td>
<td>04/02/12</td>
<td>Support to a Syrian-led political transition to a democratic, plural political system</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2 (China and Russia)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/2012/538</td>
<td>19/07/12</td>
<td>Imposing economic sanction to Syrian government if it fails to end the violence</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2 (China and Russia)</td>
<td>2 (Pakistan and South Africa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Except for the five permanent members, the non-permanent members of UN Security Council in 2011 were Gabon, Nigeria, South Africa, Lebanon, India, Brazil, Columbia, Germany, Portugal and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and in 2012 they were Morocco, Togo, South Africa, Pakistan, India, Guatemala, Columbia, Germany, Portugal and Azerbaijan.


China’s Limited Domestic Interest in Syria

Before emphasising China’s socialisation in international society and how it has influenced China’s behaviour on Syrian issues, this study needs to discuss the possible domestic factors that could contribute to Chinese decision-making. It finds that there are few internal domestic factors within China to either support or oppose Western proposals to ameliorate or settle the Syrian civil war. First, China does not have significant economic interests in Syria; indeed the interests are considerably smaller than in Libya. In 2010, the bilateral trade between China and Syria was $2.48 billion, making as
approximately 0.08% of China’s overall foreign trade.\(^{127}\) China’s imports from Syria were worth about only $40 million and included no strategic natural resources such as such as oil and gas.\(^{128}\) Chinese investment in Syria was negligible.\(^{129}\) The total number of Chinese companies operating in Syria is less than 30.\(^{130}\) In contrast, Russia has enjoyed a close relationship with Syria since the Cold War. Russian companies’ have invested in Syria’s energy sectors, tourism, and infrastructure projects.\(^{131}\) In 2009, Russian investment was approximately amounted to USD$19.4 billion.\(^{132}\) Moreover, Syria has been Russia’s seventh largest weapon customer over the past ten years.\(^{133}\)

Given these circumstances, it was not surprising that Russia vetoed the draft resolutions on Syria based on its national economic interest. However neither domestic economic drives nor traditional political ties were responsible for China’s UN votes on Syria.

Second, China does not have much personnel exchange with Syria. Before Syrian civil war, there was few Chinese living within Syria. Since 1978, the cumulative number of Chinese students in Syria was only 131; and Chinese labour working there was also limited.\(^{134}\) Unlike during Libyan civil war when Chinese government had to withdraw about 35,000 Chinese citizens by water and air from Libya,\(^{135}\) China was not concerned about its own citizens in Syria.

**Normative Persuasion and Social Influence**

Based on those the paucity of domestic or material factors which might have influenced it vote, it is likely that the external factors should be considered to understand China’s votes in UN Security Council towards Syria. The international community has collectively showed concern over the deterioration of humanitarian condition in Syria.

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\(^{128}\) Ibid.

\(^{129}\) Ibid.


\(^{132}\) Ibid.

\(^{133}\) Ibid.

\(^{134}\) Qu Xing.

during the civil war. The United States and European Union have resorted to material coercion by imposing sanctions against the Syrian government.\textsuperscript{136} Besides this material punishment given to President Assad’s forces, the normative powers have also tried to exert social influence on other members of the international society and persuade them to support the international norm of human rights in Syria. In May 2011, the US President Obama stated that President Assad “has a choice”: he can either lead “a transition to democracy” or “get out of the way.”\textsuperscript{137} On 18 August 2011, President Obama explicitly requested Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to resign to let the Syrian people determine their future.\textsuperscript{138} On the same day, the European Union High representative Catherine Ashton delivered a statement on behalf of the EU with regard to violence in Syria. She noted that the EU condemned “in the strongest terms the brutal campaign Bashar al-Assad and his regime are waging against their own people.”\textsuperscript{139} The EU had noted “the complete loss of Bashar al-Assad’s legitimacy in the eyes of the Syrian people and the necessity for him to step aside.”\textsuperscript{140} In the UN Security Council, the European powers including Britain, France, Germany and Portugal backed by the United States, sought to increase the pressure on Assad’s regime and obtain more support for the first draft resolution from the member states in 2011. British Prime Minister Cameron expressed “if anyone votes against that resolution or tries to veto it, that should be on their conscience.”\textsuperscript{141} The United States UN ambassador Susan Rice also stated that “we will be on the right side of history if and when this comes to a vote,” and “if others are unable to, or unwilling to, then that will be their responsibility to bear.”\textsuperscript{142} This normative rhetoric from the “norm leaders” (“conscience,” “right side” and “responsibility”) had spread the social influence to the other members of the international community that any non-conformity would be

\textsuperscript{136} Cutler.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
punished by “social opprobrium” if not materially. The draft resolution S/2011/612 received 9 favourable votes in the UN Security Council and two negative vetoes from Russia and China.

Before the UN Security Council voted for the second draft resolution in February 2012, the normative members attempted to persuade the other states again, particularly Russia and China. In the 6706th meeting of Security Council, the US representative believed that the Syrian regime was “fully responsible for the worsening cycle of violence.”\textsuperscript{143} The British ambassador affirmed that “the Syrian must immediately and verifiably put an end to the violence.”\textsuperscript{144} The German delegate argued that “the Council should condemn the continued and systematic human rights violation and the use of force against civilians by the Syrian authorities and demand an immediate end to all violence.”\textsuperscript{145} France offered its full support to Arab League’s plan of a peaceful political transition by which President Al-Assad should resign. France also suggested that the Council should “get past the blockages” and provide a “unanimous support of the United Nations.”\textsuperscript{146} Listening to such the normative persuasion, however, neither Russia nor China mentioned Syria in their statement at the same meeting. The draft resolution S/2012/77 was not approved due to the vetoes of Russia and China.

After the two draft resolutions failed to be adopted, the normative international society once again tried to socialise Russia and China to embrace the international norm of human rights and democracy regarding Syria. At the UN Security Council 6724th meeting which convened to discuss the situation in the Middle East, The French representative Mr Juppé addressed the Syria crisis with a strong normative persuasion speech. He believed that “Syrian regime’s crimes must not go unpunished” and the UN Security Council had an “historical responsibility for the crisis in Syria.”\textsuperscript{147} The Council had the “obligation to put an end to the gross violations of human right.”\textsuperscript{148} Mr Juppé

\textsuperscript{143} UN Security Council, 6706th Meeting, “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (S/PV.6706) 24 January 2012, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., p. 17.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., p. 19.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., pp. 26-27.
\textsuperscript{147} UN Security Council, 6734th Meeting, “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (S/PV.6734) 12 March 2012, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
reiterated the standard of a “responsible power” in international community, which was to “be firmly engaged in the cause of world peace and security” and to “place the common good above all other consideration.” Mr Juppé also suggested the possible social punishment, including denial of status and denial of membership in international society, if non-conformity with the responsible state standard continued. He expressed that “it is unacceptable for the Council to be prevented from assuming its responsibilities.” And he explicitly requested China and Russia to “heed the voices of the Arab people and the global conscience” and to join the normative society. The delegate of the United States, Hillary Clinton used normative language to persuade China and Russia as well. She stated that “the international community should say, with one voice, without hesitation or caveat, that the killings of innocent Syrians must stop and a political transition must begin.” She affirmed the commitment of international community to assisting “democratic transitions all across the Middle East and North Africa.” The British representative Mr Hague believed that the UN Security Council had “so far failed in its responsibilities towards the Syrian people” and urged the Council to “show unity and leadership.” Even though the normative members repeatedly advocated the international norm of human rights and democracy in Syria issues, the draft resolution proposed by European members and the United States was not adopted because of Russia and China’s vetoes.

Disappointed by Russia and China’s veto of the draft resolution on Syria, the “norm entrepreneurs” had given both countries considerable social punishment. After the first draft resolution was denied, the “norm promoters” had expressed their regrets and disappointment. In the statement after voting, Britain pointed out that “we, and indeed the majority of members of the Council” supported the sanctions, while “a minority” of two countries opposed it. Social psychology indicates that if individuals want to belong to a group to receive the “reinforcements that come from group membership,” they will be motivated to conform to the norms of the reference group in order to obtain or maintain

149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid., pp. 11-12.
153 Ibid., p. 12.
154 Ibid., p. 5.
155 UN Security Council, 6627th Meeting, “The situation in the Middle East” (S/PV.6627) 4 October 2011, p. 7.
the membership. Britain’s statement excluded China and Russia from the reference group (“we”), thereby exerting social punishment of status denial from the normative society. Since China had intended to be recognised as a “responsible power” in international community, this rejection of identity could be an effective social punishment to prod compliance with the norm of human rights and democracy. The United States likewise strongly criticised China and Russia for not supporting the action. Ms Rice spoke that the United States was “outraged that this Council has utterly failed to address an urgent moral challenge” in Syria. France applied powerful social opprobrium to China and Russia as well. Mr Araud noted that the vetoes were on principle and a “refusal of all Council resolutions against Syria.” China and Russia’s vetoes signalled their “disdain for the legitimate aspirations” of Syrian people and rejection of Arab Spring movement for freedom and democracy.

When the second and third draft resolutions were vetoed by China and Russia once again in 2012, the “norm leaders” employed even more severe social opprobrium to both of the countries. The French ambassador believed that it was “a sad day” for the Council, Syrian people and “all the friends of democracy” when China and Russia cast the negative votes. He stated that China and Russia had “systematically obstructed” all the actions of the Council and history would “judge harshly those countries.” The US delegates Ms Rice expressed her criticism directly and strongly by saying that “the United States is disgusted” by China and Russian’s non-cooperation. She suggested that the UN Security Council was “held hostage” by Russia and China on Syria issues, and the two countries stood “behind empty arguments and individual interests.” The British representative criticised Russia and China for “turning their backs on the Arab world” and “supporting tyranny rather than the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.”

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157 Ibid., p. 8.
158 Ibid., p. 3.
159 Ibid.
160 UN Security Council, 6711th Meeting, “The situation in the Middle East” (S/PV.6711) 4 February 2012, p.3.
161 Ibid., pp.3-4.
162 Ibid., p. 5.
163 Ibid. Also see UN Security Council, 6810th Meeting, “The situation in the Middle East” (S/PV.6810) 19 July 2012, pp. 10-11.
164 Ibid., p. 7.
explicitly pointed out that Russia and China had “failed in their responsibility as permanent member of the Security Council.”

China’s Responses: “Norm Follower” or “Norm Shaper”?

The evidence in the last chapter suggests that China has paid more attention to the new international criteria of “responsible power” during the last decade. China has realised that the international society today expects the “responsible member states” to provide global common goods and promote universal values of human rights and representative democracy. To reach this international standard, China has agreed to the norm of human rights and democracy in general by signing and ratifying most of the important international human rights treaties. However, there remain differences between the Western interpretation of human rights norm and China’s. Some Western scholars have proposed “post-Westphalian norms” which emphasize the responsibility of the international community to “infringe on the autonomy of the nation-state to protect or advance other considerations.”

Facing serious humanitarian crises in Rwanda and Kosovo in the 1990s when the international society failed to adopt effective measures, the concept of “responsibility to protect” emerged. Since then, the idea of “responsibility to protect” has been largely reflected in the Western-oriented norm of human rights and democracy and is in opposition to the traditional Westphalian principle of state sovereignty. Sovereignty, as a variable instead of a static concept, has been given changing interpretations for different time periods in international relations studies. It is defined based on a “monitored set of relations between states.”

The United Nations position today is that even though the main duty of protecting human rights remains with the national state, the role that international community plays “cannot be blocked by the

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165 Ibid. Also see UN Security Council, 6810th Meeting, “The situation in the Middle East” (S/PV.6810) 19 July 2012, p.3.
168 Qu.
It argues that “sovereignty no longer exclusively protects States from foreign interference; it is a charge of responsibility where States are accountable for the welfare of their people.” The “norm entrepreneurs” intended to respond to the Syrian civil war and promoted international norm of human rights based on the idea of “responsibility of protect.” Trying to socialise China and Russia, the European states and the United States had employed much normative persuasion and social influence before and after the voting at Security Council.

In the dynamic process of state socialisation over Syria China has responded to the expectations of the international society in two significant ways. First, China has dealt with the social influence very carefully, especially the opprobrium from the normative community. China had no intention to be isolated in international society because of its vetoes on Syria, and thus it showed some accommodating gestures by supporting most of the political mediation and settlements that the UN proposed. For example, China favoured the UN Supervision Mission in Syria and Mr Annan’s mediation. In order to show that it did not take either side, China urged Syrian government to negotiate with the opposition and take steps towards forming a transitional government. China’s recent rhetoric has further revealed a relatively more cooperative attitude towards Western policy prescriptions. At a news briefing in early 2013 a China’s Foreign Ministry spokesman remarked that China supported any efforts that can “expedite the process of resolving the Syrian conflict politically,” as well as “the impartial mediation of UN-Arab League Special Envoy Brahimi.” He also stated that China welcomed the Action Group Geneva Communiqué which advocated a transitional government in Syria that would “feature representatives of both the government and its opposition.”

Second, China has sought to influence the human rights norm rooted in Western experience. As discussed above, state socialisation is not always a one-way path that the

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171 Ibid.
175 Ibid.

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“novice” state can merely accept and internalise the expectation from the international society. Instead, the “novice” state can also influence the international community by contributing its own values to the evolving international norms.\textsuperscript{176} As a Great Power China has not only been complying with international norms in order to be recognised as a qualified member and responsible state, but also has been trying to shape the development and evolution of norms through state socialisation. China has been engaged in the evolution of the international norm of human rights and the principle of “responsibility to protect” since the 1990s. Some scholars have identified a norm diffusion loop though which both China and the normative community can obtain feedbacks from each other and then adjust the properties of the idea of “responsibility to protect.”\textsuperscript{177} China has been strongly advocating a strict interpretation of “responsibility to protect,” and believes it should not go beyond the agreement made in 2005 World Summit that the primary responsibility to a state populations rests on individual State.\textsuperscript{178} After adopting this international norm in 2005, China has localised it to reflect China’s core foreign policy principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention.\textsuperscript{179} China’s feedback of norm localisation influenced the normative community as evident in when UN General Assembly emphasised the idea of “R2P” in 2009 should be premised upon the 2005 World Summit outcome.\textsuperscript{180}

In the case of Syria, China has formalised its own principle and approach toward non-intervention to practise the norm of human rights in global governance. First, China believes that sovereignty equality and non-interference in domestic affairs are the basic norms governing the international humanitarian actions; and any attempt of regime change imposed by external forces under the name of promoting human rights and democracy should be avoided. China insisted that the crisis in Syria could only be settled “on the basis of respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity

\textsuperscript{176} Pu Xiaoyu, pp. 4.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., p. 214. Also see UN General Assembly, 60\textsuperscript{th} Session, “2005 World Summit Outcome,” paragraphs 138 and 139 (A/60/L.1), 15 September 2005, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{179} Prantl and Nakano, p. 214.
\textsuperscript{180} UN General Assembly, 63th Session, “Resolution adopted by the General Assembly” (A/RES/63/308), 7 October 2009.
of Syria.” Second, China has been very cautious about sanctions and military measures in humanitarian actions and has preferred peaceful political solutions or measures which would not raise the level of violence. In Syria China has stated that contemplated sanctions, far from leading to resolution of the conflict could “often lead to further complications of the situation.” Additionally, China reiterated its strong opposition towards the use of force to solve the Syria issues.

Even though the Western-oriented norm of “responsibility to protect” enjoys popularity in international society, China has also obtained some support from other countries in terms of its own principle to promote human rights in Syria. South Africa representative spoke to UN Security Council that the international community should “uphold and respect the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria.” He also expressed that “fundamentally, no foreign or external parties should interfere in Syria,” and international community should not impose regime change on Syria. Pakistan also believed that “interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States and supporting such concepts as regime change are alien to the ethos of international good-neighbourliness.” Indian delegate pointed out that international community should not “complicate the situation by threats of sanctions, regime change, et cetera.” These voices, to some extent, support China’s interpretation of human rights norms. Perhaps more significantly from the perspective of norm establishment, Russia held the similar point of view with China on Syria. Russia and China worked together and prepared their own version of the draft resolution with a non-interventionist approach. Russia maintained that the Russian and Chinese draft was based on “the logic of respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria as well as the principle of

182 Security Council, 6710th Meeting, “The situation in the Middle East” (S/PV.6710) 31 January 2012, p. 25.
183 Ibid. Also see UN General Assembly, 66th Session, 97th Meeting (A/66/PV.97), 16 February 2012, p. 8.
184 Security Council, 6757th Meeting, “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (S/PV.6757) 23 April 2012, p. 20.
185 Security Council, 6711th Meeting, “The situation in the Middle East” (S/PV.6711) 4 February 2012, p. 11. Also see Security Council, 6734th Meeting, “The situation in the Middle East” (S/PV.6734) 12 March 2012, p. 23.
non-intervention, including military, in its affairs.” When Russia cast the negative veto at Security Council for the third time in July 2012, Russian representative Mr Churkin explained that Russia could not accept a document that “would open the way for the pressure of sanctions and later for external military involvement in Syria domestic affairs.” Russia and China’s collaboration on Syria issues at the Security Council had made both of them less isolated in the international community.

There are two reasons to explain China’s responses towards Syria issues in the context of China’s socialisation in international society. First, Beijing has learned a lesson from the case of Libya, and therefore has little social motivation to choose pro-group behaviour in Syria. Chinese scholars, mass media and domestic public have expressed their disappointment from various perspectives towards the “lack of appreciation” from the international community for China’s cooperation in Libya issues. In the absence of both material and social rewards, Beijing’s cost-benefit analysis in Libya was regarded a “complete loss.” China believed that the situation in Syria would be the same: Syrian opposition would only be grateful to Western countries, not China, for their military intervention; and Western countries would still consider China an “irresponsible power” because of its authoritarian regime under Chinese Communist Party. Based on this calculation, China expected little social benefit from positive votes for Syrian resolutions and was unlikely to contribute any favourable votes.

Second, since it has its own interpretation of human rights norm and principles to uphold the norm, China’s actions concerning Syria can be understood as part of an attempt to influence the normative society and shape the evolution of the norm during the process of state socialisation. Individuals always tend to identify with a reference group that can provide them with more positive rewards. China has been trying to integrate into international society since the late 1970s. China’s conformity with many international norms is largely based on the assumption that Western normative powers are the reference group in the international community for China to identify with and “mimic.”

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188 UN Security Council, 6627th Meeting, “The situation in the Middle East” (S/PV.6627) 4 October 2011, p. 3.
190 Sun.
191 Yan Xuetong, “China’s Veto on Syria: A View from China.”
192 Lau, p. 221.
If China believes it would be difficult to internalise the international norm of human rights created by Western countries, and more importantly, to gain social rewards for its compliance with the norm, China will be more likely to choose another reference group by which China can promote its own norms in international society and socially benefit more. It is evident that the Chinese vetoes on the draft resolutions provided a real support to Russia. By joining with Russia and several other members at Security Council, the potential reference group for China to advocate its own understanding of human rights is enlarging. This alternative social grouping may generate “norm contestation” between the Western values represented by “responsibility to protect” and Chinese principle of “non-interference” and “state sovereignty” in humanitarian actions.

**Conclusion**

The “Arab Spring” movement has profoundly influenced the Middle East and North Africa since 2010. The advocates for human rights and democratisation from the Arab world have brought a new wave of norm diffusion into the world. When the humanitarian crises escalated in Libya and Syria, the international community attempted to intervene under the name of human rights and democracy. As a permanent member of UN Security Council, China’s votes on these two countries could largely determine the prospects of the draft resolutions. The engagement in non-traditional security issues can also serve as an opportunity for China to assume responsibilities rooted in its status of a “responsible great power.” In the Libyan case, China tacitly supported humanitarian norms and the supported democratic transitions with external assistance from western countries. China favoured six resolutions on Libya and abstained from the most important Libyan resolution 1973 (2011), which cleared the way for NATO’s military intervention in Libya. In the case of Syria China employed its veto three times to prevent any possible international sanction or military intervention towards the Syrian government. China had little material interest in Syria; while in Libya China could have voted negatively based on domestic factors or material interests which aligned it with the Gaddafi government. In

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the absence of domestic demand and external coercion, this chapter has explored this topic through a state socialisation approach. It argues that the normative persuasion and social influence from the international community, especially from the “norm leaders,” has engaged China in the global dialogue of promoting human rights and democracy. Because of this persuasion and social influence, mainly from European members and the United States, China decided to identify itself with those normative states in the international society and comply with the idea of “responsibility to protect” in humanitarian actions in the case of Libya. In return, China expected to be benefited socially with the recognition of its “responsible power” status and normative support from the international community. Receiving neither material nor social rewards, China was discouraged by its diplomatic failure in Libya. Since China’s conformity with the Western-oriented norm of human rights could not provide it social (or material benefits) benefits, in the Syrian crisis China has held onto its own principle of state sovereignty and non-interference into domestic affairs. With Russian collaboration, China may have established another reference group different from Western normative powers, to promote its own rules and norms of humanitarian action instead of “responsibility to protect.” From this perspective, China can be seen as transforming from a “norm follower” to “norm shaper” in international society, and thus exert influence onto the normative community through state socialisation.

Nevertheless, the Western interpretation of the norms of human rights and democracy still prevails in international society. And this normative framework is institutionally supported by many international organisations, such as the United Nations. The large membership and reputation of those organisations has served as the platforms for the norm diffusion and internalisation to most of the countries in the world. If it seeks to create a “norm contestation” between Chinese principles and Western values of human rights, China needs to attract more members to join the reference group with China’s as the “norm leader.” Realistically, this scenario is not likely to happen in a near future since China has been focusing on its domestic economic development and there is no institutional platform to support an alternative emerging norm at this time. However, with more “comprehensive national power” and more engagement into the international
society, a confident and influential China could contribute more to the evolution of international norms and include Chinese interpretation and criteria into the concept of “responsible power.”

Some studies have suggested that socialisation based on positive social influence are sometimes more successful than socialisation built upon social punishment such as opprobrium and shame. Social psychology studies on forced-compliance paradigms shows that individuals are more willing to comply with social norms when they believe that they actually have certain “free choices” instead of being socially coerced. External pressure that is too “heavy-handed” sometimes cannot lead to social conformity. This theory is supported in this case. Praises and normative supports are very important for “novice state” like China to establish self-identification with the reference groups and perform in a pro-group way. In the case of Libya and Syria, Western normative states relied on severe social opprobrium much more than social rewards to engage China. This approach discouraged China by making it feel coerced, humiliated, isolated and little rewarded in international community. Lastly China tends to be sensitive to “peer pressure” due to the fear of being isolated in international society. China often makes the foreign policy decisions compatible with that of its “peer states” with which China believes it shares common features. In this case, China was more likely to behave in the way (either comply or not) that was consistent with the policy choices of other BRICs countries (Brazil, Russia and Indian) or regional actors (such as Arab League and the African Union). And when it decided to apply the power of veto in Syria resolutions, China had never acted on its own without some support of “peer states” in the normative community.

196 Ibid.
CHAPTER FIVE

“Common but Differentiated Responsibilities”: China’s Socialisation into International Environmental Regimes

Introduction

One of the standards of a “responsible power” since the 1980s is that member states should actively participate in international regimes and organisations that “contribute to the core international society goal of international peace and security.”1 This standard expects states to undertake collective action and comply with global norms such as disarmament, UN peacekeeping, international trade and environmental protection.2 Environmental movements started in the 1960s (mainly in the United States) and have spread to many other states, resulting in increased public and governmental attention to pollution, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity and disease due to human activities.3 The salience of the issue is such that states are expected to ameliorate trans-border pollution and contribute to global environmental governance as an essential component of their international responsibilities. China has actively participated in this growing international environmental movement. It has ratified or signed about 50 international environmental conventions since the 1960s and engaged with international environmental regimes intensively after its Reforming and Opening Up.4

This chapter first examines China’s participation in the major international environmental treaties under the UN framework. It adopts the method of network analysis to depict and explain China’s relative position in global environmental regimes and its connection with other member states. It argues that the structurally equivalent cluster in the network of environmental treaties suggests that China is actively engaged and shares

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2 Ibid., p. 9.
similar strength to other states in the network. It indicates that China would act similarly to other states due to this structural equivalence. The second section is a case-study of China’s involvement with *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD) from 1993 to 2013. It aims to investigate China’s gradual state socialisation into the international norm of biological diversity by observing the socialisation micro-processes of persuasion, social influence, mimicking and identification, as well as the norm localisation in China. It contends that under the influence of “peer states” and relatively large size of the normative group, China’s has generally internalised the norm of biological diversity into both its foreign policy and domestic practice as a part of its state responsibility. In contrast to the CBD, the third section presents a “rough path” of China’s state socialisation into the international norms of climate change, through an examination of *Framework Convention on Climate Change* and *Kyoto Protocol*. It argues that “norm contestation” and small size of the climate change normative community has made norm diffusion and localisation difficult. From a constructivist perspective then, the failure of China to fully subscribe to the international norms of climate change is in part due to the lack of social influence and group identification in the international community. Instead of subscribing to international norms proposed by major powers and norms entrepreneurs in from Western states, it has proposed and promoted the rule of “common but differentiated responsibilities” in dealing with global climate change and other environmental issues.

**China’s Participation in Major International Environmental Treaties**

China has signed and ratified all the major international environmental treaties listed by United Nations Development Programme up until 2005. China joined the normative community of environmental protection as early as most of the countries in the higher ranks of Human Development Index (HDI) even though under the index it has a medium level of human development. Table 6 demonstrates the nine international environmental treaties and when those selected countries signed or ratified them. The selected states are some OECD members with higher HDI and the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) with lower HDI.
### Table 6  Status of major international environmental treaties

|------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|


**Notes:** Data are as of 1 July 2007. Data refer to year of ratification, accession approval or succession. **Bold** signifies signature not yet followed by ratification.

**International Environmental Regimes: A Network Mapping**

Network analysis examines the relationships defined by links among agents (nodes). It is based on the idea that ties between agents can channel the transmission and exchange of material (such as currency and weapons) and non-material (such as beliefs and norms) products.\(^5\) The patterns of the connections among agents create the structure that can

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enable or restrict the behaviour of agents.\textsuperscript{6} Recent IR scholars suggest that network analysis can provide a useful research method to identify and measure the sources of socialisation and norm diffusion based on “the strength of ties between states, collective state identities such as security communities, and the importance of individual states.”\textsuperscript{7}

Among the nine treaties listed in Table 6, Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutions is the latest (2001). And by 2005, most of the nine countries had signed or ratified all the nine treaties. Therefore, it is appropriate to use the years 2001, 2003 and 2005 for the network analysis as by these years most states had established the requisite links. This analysis starts with creating an affiliation matrix (Table 7) where the numeral “1” indicates a state’s membership in a particular environmental treaty, and then multiplies the matrix and convert it to a socio-matrix (Table 8). In the socio-matrix, for example, the value 6 in the row of Australia and the column of Japan in 2001 means that Australia and Japan shared the membership in 6 international environmental treaties in 2001 and thus had equivalent strength of “6” in that year. Figure 6 is graphed based on the socio-matrix and depicts the distribution of ties across the network. It illustrates the derivation of network ties among nine states in nine major international environmental treaties.

\textit{Degree Centrality}

This analysis observes the structural characteristics in the network by focusing on the centrality, which measures the importance of each node (state) in the network of international environmental treaties. Among the variants of centrality, the author has calculated the degree centrality (see Table 8).\textsuperscript{8} The degree centrality of a node is simply the sum of the value of the ties between that node and every other node in the network.\textsuperscript{9} For example, the degree centrality of Australia in 2001, (totalling “47”) is the sum of value of ties between Australia and the rest of the eight countries. This measure reveals

\textsuperscript{7} Hafner-Burton, Kahler and Montgomery, p. 569.
\textsuperscript{8} There are three variants of centrality in a network, including degree centrality, closeness centrality and betweenness centrality. For details, see John P. Scott, \textit{Social Network Analysis: A Handbook}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} edition (London: Sage, 2012), esp. Chapter 5; also see Wasserman and Faust, esp. Chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{9} Hafner-Burton, Kahler and Montgomery, p. 563.
the number of access/connections that a particular state has to other states in the network. High degree centrality means strong links with many other states and is usually related with the possession of more social power in the network because of the easy access to resources and information at a central network position.\textsuperscript{10} Some scholars of international relations have embraced the notion of degree centrality as indicative of a state’s relative prestige and social power in the network.\textsuperscript{11} They argue that prestigious states with more network power are those states having high degree centrality. With high degree centrality, these states can “withhold or promise social benefits such as membership and recognition or enact social sanctions such as marginalisation as a method of coercion.”\textsuperscript{12}

In the study of international norms, network analysis can be utilised to identify the channels of norm diffusion from the “norm entrepreneurs” which are usually located in the central position of the network to the “norm novices” which can be observed gradually moving from the periphery to the centre. Those states at the similar footing (with similar degree centrality) can be regarded as “peers,” and the “peer pressure” among them is the significant source of social influence in the socialisation process. Substantial amount of persuasion and social influence can be expected from those states at the centre of network with more social resources and power. Meanwhile, the network analysis predicts the behaviour of mimicking and identification from the “novice states”, such as China, Brazil and Indian.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p. 570.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 11.
Table 7  Affiliation matrix: States’ participation in major international environmental treaties in 2001, 2003 and 2005

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Notes: The numbers from 1 to 9 in the first row represents the environmental treaties listed in Table 6.
In the matrix, 1 indicates a state’s membership in a particular treaty; while 0 indicates a non-membership.
Table 8  Socio-matrix: States’ shared membership/connects with each other in major international environmental treaties

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The average and standard derivation of all the value of ties in each year:

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Figure 6 Network map: States’ connections with each other under major international environmental treaties

2001

Connections:
- 4-5
- 6-7
- 8-9

2003
In the processes of state socialisation, states with high degree centrality in the normative community can usually be regarded as “norm entrepreneurs”; while the social “novices” are those states with low degree centrality in the network. Enjoying more social power, highly connected states tend to avoid wielding the power of exit; whereas the less associated states at the margins of the network are more credible when they threaten to withdraw from the network.\(^{13}\) Thus it is expected that if a state’s social power in a network declines, the threat to exit would be more likely.\(^{14}\) In the network of international environmental treaties, Japan, France and Britain held relatively higher degree centrality throughout 2001 to 2005. Australia, Brazil, China and India have the degree centrality in the medium range. The United States and Russia retain the lowest degree centrality over the five years compared with the other seven countries. Based on this degree centrality distribution Japan, France and Britain would have occupied the

\(^{13}\) Hafner-Burton, Kahler and Montgomery, pp. 572-573.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 573.
central positions in this international environmental network since 2001. They can be considered the subgroup of “norm entrepreneurs” in this community. China, Brazil and India belong to another subgroup which has been rapidly socialised into the normative society. By 2005 they have attained the same central positions as the other “norm leaders.” Australia has a well-connected and central status in the network in 2001; yet it seems lose some of the prestige and social power from then on. The United State and Russia occupied relatively marginal positions of the network during the 5 years. Nevertheless, during the period of 2003 to 2005 various actions suggest that Russia was becoming increasingly accepting of environmental norms.

**Structural Equivalence**

A structural equivalent cluster describes a group within which every member has ties of similar strength to each other in the network.15 In the general sense, the environmental network in Figure 6 displays a structural equivalence among most of member states. The value of equivalent connections in the socio-matrix of international environmental treaties, along with the low standard derivation, demonstrates that the strength of ties among those countries (excluding the United States and Russia) is comparable with each other. This structurally equivalent map indicates a low centralised network of international environmental regime, i.e. where paths of resources and information among different states distribute relatively evenly instead of concentrating in the hands of a few members. Therefore, social power and the legal responsibilities are collectively shared among most of the member states in this network. There is no particular state possessing exclusive ties and serving as a network “broker” or “mediator” to gain influence. Consequently, the removal or withdrawal of a few nodes may not unduly disrupt the network. For example, the less involvement of Russia and the United States does not interrupt most of the interaction among the other seven countries.

Observing the network more closely it is evident that there is structural equivalence both among the states generally but also with various subgroups. The structural equivalence within different subgroups of the network predicts the similar behaviours

15 Hafner-Burton, Kahler and Montgomery, pp. 566.
occurring on members in the similar structural position.\textsuperscript{16} This observation complements the theory of state socialisation by tracing the sources and paths of socialisation, and differentiating “norm leader” and “norm follower” in the social group. In this environmental network, for example, Japan, France, Britain and Brazil have slightly stronger ties in 2003 than the rest of the countries and thus create a potential subgroup. This subgroup’s members are more likely to behave as the leaders in the socialisation process and spread the international environmental norm to the other states in the network. On the other hand, the United States and Russia, possessing the fewest connections in the network are more or less structural equivalent and could exhibit behavioural similarity during the socialisation process.

\textit{China in International Environmental Regime: A Network Analysis}

China has become deeply embedded within the network of the nine major international environmental treaties. Table 6 demonstrates that China is neither the founding state nor the latest member of most of the environmental treaties among the nine countries selected. Often China joined the environmental treaties at the “norm cascade” stage when a large number of countries signed and ratified the treaties. This pattern of participation in international environmental regime makes such a regime a useful case-study to examine the state socialisation of China because as a “novice state” China has been sensitive to the social pressure from both “norm entrepreneurs” and “peer states.” The degree centrality in Table 8 reveals that China has gradually gained the central position in the network of international environmental regime. In 2003, China still belonged to the subgroup of the “non-centre states”; however, it has achieved a central position in the network in 2005. As such, it is evident that the early 2000s is the critical period for China’s socialisation into the normative environmental regime society. As Japan, France and Britain have been consistently at the centre of the network, they are more likely to be the sources of persuasion and social influence for China’s socialisation.

Network theory suggests behavioural similarity among states at the same network position. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that China has experienced “peer pressure” to

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 567.
share the same responsibilities in global environmental governance after it reached a similar central position with other states. Since China has linked preferentially with more connected members in the network, this analysis predicts China is less likely to withdraw or exit from this environmental community. Nevertheless, whether China would acknowledge responsibility and adopt the pro-norm behaviour is largely determined by which subgroup China identifies itself with and the size of the normative group. As the great powers and permanent members of UN Security Council, the United States and Russia occupy a marginal place in the network. Without their participation, the smaller size of the normative group may not be appealing to the novice states like China. Moreover, if China chooses to identify with the United States and Russia in this environmental network, it would be unlikely that the international society could expect China’s adherence to the proffered environmental norms. Meanwhile, the “norm leaders” at the central position would exploit the network resources and exert social power to either persuade or coerce other states to join the normative community.

**China’s Socialisation into Convention on Biological Diversity**

In response to the growing concerns over species extinction due to human activities, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) convened the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity in 1988 to examine the necessity of an international convention to protect the sustainable use of biological diversity. In the next year, UNEP Governing Council created an Ad Hoc Working Group of Technical and Legal Experts to prepare an international legal instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. As the evidence of their commitment to sustainable development, countries attending the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) - “the Earth Summit” in Rio de Janeiro signed two legally binding conventions: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Rio summit in 1992 has triggered a series of international conferences addressing global environmental issues.

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18 Ibid.
Over 150 governments signed CBD at Rio conference itself; and more than 175 countries have ratified the Convention to date.\textsuperscript{19} Pursuing the goals of preserving biodiversity and sharing the benefits from genetic resources in an equitable way, the Convention also promotes the norm of “shared responsibility” and “common concern of mankind” in biological diversity.\textsuperscript{20} The governing body of CBD is the Conference of the Parties (COP) which has held 11 ordinary meetings and one extraordinary meeting.\textsuperscript{21}

The Article 19 of the Convention concerns the “handling of biotechnology and distribution of its benefits” and provides that the  parties “shall consider the need for and modalities of a protocol setting out appropriate procedure…in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of any living modified organism resulting from biotechnology…”\textsuperscript{22} To fulfil this commitment, COP arranged expert meetings to “consider, as appropriate, existing knowledge, experience and legislation in the field of biosafety” for the purpose of facilitating COP to reach an informed decision of a protocol.\textsuperscript{23} On 29 January 2000, COP adopted a supplementary agreement to the Convention—\textit{Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety} to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms. The Protocol entered into force on 11 September 2003.\textsuperscript{24}

China is considered to be one of a few “mega-diversity” countries in the world. Over 20\% total land area covered by forest harbouring various forms of wildlife.\textsuperscript{25} China is also rich of wetland and natural grassland where more than 2,000 species of wild animals and a large number of plants inhabit.\textsuperscript{26} About 10\% marine species and 20\% fish species in world have been recorded in China.\textsuperscript{27} Nevertheless this flora and fauna diversity has

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid..
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid..
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid..
been under threat due to economic development, population growth and shifting land use patterns and climate change. Despite the continuously growing forest cover rate in China and other positive trends, China has been suffering the degradation and desertification of its major grasslands and wetlands, as well as the increasing loss of species, especially groundfish, wild higher plants, wild animals and genetic resources.\(^{28}\) According to the State Environmental Protection Administration which published the 2008 China Species Red List, 34.74% of invertebrates, 35.92% of vertebrates, 69.91% of gymnosperms and 86.63% of angiosperms out of the total of 17,300 species of flowering plants and 667 endemic vertebrates are considered endangered.

China has been considered an active participant in global environmental governance since its first attendance at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference) in 1972.\(^{29}\) China involvement with the CBD began early. It was one of the first states and the first member of the UN Security Council to ratify the Convention.\(^{30}\) China signed *Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety* in 2000. Nevertheless, it took almost five years to overcome the domestic resistance and to ratify the Protocol in 2005. Chinese concerns about the potential of the Protocol to constrain development have not been uncommon among member states of CBD. Several major powers have not yet ratified the Protocol, such as the United States, Australia and Russia.

Part of the Chinese government’s motivation in environmental protection arises from public dissatisfaction with continued environmental degradation due to economic development. Environmental protest has become one of the largest forms of social unrest in China, and, unlike other types of protests, it is often tolerated by the local authorities.\(^{31}\) The “mass incident” concerning environmental problems has grown at the average rate of

\(^{28}\) *Ibid.*


\(^{30}\) China is the sixth countries which ratified the CBD. The other five earlier countries are Canada, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Monaco and Seychelles. The other four UN Security Council members: the United State has not ratified CBD; Britain and France ratified the Convention in 1994, and Russia, in 1995. See United Nations, *Treaty Series*, Vol. 1760, p. 79.

29\% from 1996 to 2011.\textsuperscript{32} According to a survey conducted by the Public Opinion Research Center of Shanghai Jiao Tong University in 2013, 80\% of Chinese residents believe that Chinese government should give environmental protection a higher priority than economic development; and the overall evaluation of the government performance in environmental issues is negative.\textsuperscript{33} Given this domestic pressure, it is not surprising that Chinese government has actively participated in international environmental regimes. Nevertheless, the domestic demand and pressure for environmental protection should not be exaggerated or given to much causal significance in explaining China’s participation in international environmental regimes. First, in an authoritarian state such as China, the civil society and non-governmental organisations have very limited influence on China’s environmental diplomacy compared to many Western countries. Second, most domestic complaints about environmental problems in China are related to noise pollution, water pollution, food safety and so on. There is no substantial public debate or political campaign about China’s involvement in biodiversity and climate change regimes. For example, unlike European Union which faced much pressure from the public and had to strengthen the biotechnology regulations on genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the Chinese government had received little societal pressure concerning GMOSs when it decided to join and ratify \textit{Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety}.\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{Elite Learning: Early Socialisation}

Notwithstanding domestic factors, influence from the international normative community has largely shaped China’s environmental policy, especially at the early stage of China’s involvement with global environmental governance. China’s initial environmental diplomacy started in the early 1970s during the Cultural Revolution, where the massive domestic political and ideological upheaval led to little interest by the Chinese public in environmental issues. Indeed, many people believed that “environmental issues” did not exist in a socialist state, and the smoke and waste water

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.


from the factories was welcome symbol of the country’s development and prosperity.\textsuperscript{35} Given these domestic factors, and unlike various Western countries which enacted environmental policies due to domestic environmental activism and dissatisfaction with the state of the environment, China engaged with the environmental norms in the 1970s mainly due to the socialisation effect on China’s political elites.

Although some ancient Chinese classics suggested the idea of “sustainable development” in agriculture, the notion of “environmental protection” was not widely understood or accepted in China before the 1970s. Searching the database of \textit{People’s Daily} with the keywords of “environmental protection” (环境保护), no article on environmental protection could be found from the period of 1 October 1949 to 1 June 1972 immediately prior to the Stockholm Conference.\textsuperscript{36} Nevertheless, China’s “elite learning” process began in the late 1960s. In his 1968 inaugural address, then US President Richard Nixon noted that “government has passed more laws, spent more money, initiated more programs…in protecting our environment and enhancing the quality of life…”\textsuperscript{37} China’s late Premier Zhou Enlai read Nixon’s address yet apparently could not understand the concept of “environmental protection.”\textsuperscript{38} He then organised researchers in the Central Investigation Department of CPC to extensively study various international sources on topics related to environment, such as the reason for environmental protection, the causes of pollution, the damage due to pollution, Western scholars’ opinions on environmental problems and Western governments’ environmental policies.\textsuperscript{39} Convinced of the seriousness of such issues, Zhou then publically commented that environmental protection was critical for the survival of the nation, and China should spend money and mobilise the public to reduce levels of environmental pollution.\textsuperscript{40}


\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
Zhou’s comments indicate early Chinese elite learning on environmental issues under the international influences.

The earliest high level environmental protection policy body in China was also established in response to UN Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. On 15 December 1971, soon after replacing Taiwan in the United Nations, China received the invitation to Conference. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health requested instructions from State Council about whether China should attend the conference.\(^{41}\) Having realised the importance of environment issues, Premier Zhou decided to send more than 30 Chinese delegates to the Conference, the largest UN delegation to that time.\(^{42}\) A small leading group was established under the State Council in 1971 to prepare for China’s conference attendance.\(^{43}\) In the same year, the State Planning Commission founded an Environmental Protection Office; the name being the first time that the words “environmental protection” appeared in the title of a Chinese governmental institution.\(^{44}\)

Returning from Stockholm Conference, Chinese delegates reported to Zhou Enlai, Li Xiannian (Vice Premier) and Yu Qiuli (director of State Planning Commission).\(^{45}\) Their report suggested that China was experiencing serious environmental problems, such as air, water and solid waste pollution, as well as other forms of ecological damage.\(^{46}\) Zhou explicitly expressed his concerns about China’s environmental issues and noted that environmental protection should be placed on the national agenda.\(^{47}\) He sent some research teams to investigate urban planning processes and to observe various

\(^{41}\) Zhai Yaliu 翟亚柳.


\(^{45}\) Zhai Yaliu 翟亚柳.

\(^{46}\) Ibid.

environmental mitigation policies in Western states.\(^{48}\) Under Zhou’s leadership, China’s first national conference on environmental protection was held in Beijing in August 1973.\(^{49}\) The conference and the initial regulation of environmental protection which resulted from the meeting is considered to be China’s initial efforts in environmental governance. This early engagement with international environmental regime, followed by the domestic legal and policy change, however, was largely built upon elite learning and was initiated without significant domestic support or input, a process consistent with a state-above-society structure suggested by Checkel.\(^{50}\) In this “top-down” policy-making context, elites’ access to the norm of “environmental protection,” indicated by Premier Zhou’s attention and interest in environmental issues, enabled the initial phase of norm diffusion in China during the early 1970s.

\textit{Norm Entrepreneurs: Persuasion and Social Influence}

\textit{United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)}

Serving as norm entrepreneurs, some international organisations have played essential roles in norm diffusion process and have been important in socialising China into the normative society of CBD through the mechanism of persuasion and social influence. UNEP, established in 1972, is one of the first international organisations that successfully engaged China. UNEP has been a CBD norm leader during the past 30 years by developing and pursuing an international agenda on biodiversity.\(^{51}\) The Governing Council of UNEP compromises 58 members elected by the General Assembly for four-year terms. The Council membership consists of 16 African states, 13 Asian states, 6 Eastern European states, 10 Latin American and Caribbean states, and 13 Western European states.\(^{52}\) China favours this arrangement in the Governing Council, because the

\(^{48}\) He Libo 何立波.
developing countries hold most of the seats.\textsuperscript{53}

Based on the strong identification with the developing member states, China was elected the Council in 1973, and has had a permanent mission to UNEP since 1976.\textsuperscript{54} UNEP has encouraged and supported Chinese efforts to improve environmental governance. First, UNEP persuaded China to join in United Nations Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS) which requires member states to gather, analyse and evaluate the environmental data within their territories and share the information with the global community. Acting on UNEP’s recommendations, China has established monitoring stations in several major cities.\textsuperscript{55} Second, UNEP has organised environmental seminars in China and provided financial support to China’s environmental periodicals, a bimonthly magazine \textit{World Environment} and a newspaper \textit{China Environment News}.\textsuperscript{56} Since the 1980s, for example, UNEP has held three conferences in China concerning efforts to control desertification. These conferences included several extensive field trips in Northern and Western China which were attended by scholars and government officials from nine countries as well as their Chinese counterparts.\textsuperscript{57} Third, UNEP has made great efforts to convince China to sign a series of international environmental treaties, such as CBD, \textit{Convention to Combat Desertification}, and \textit{Convention on the Law of the Sea}.\textsuperscript{58}

Apart from the normative persuasion and “teaching” to the “novice” state like China, UNEP has also exerted social influence on member states by distributing social rewards. Since 1987, UNEP has launched “Global 500 Award” to recognise and honour environmental achievement in countries, organisations and individuals.\textsuperscript{59} At the 2000

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} Zhan Guang 占光, “Lun Sidegeermo renlei huanjing huiyi dui zhongguo huanjing zhili de yingxiang” 论斯德哥尔摩人类环境会议对中国环境治理的影响 [The influence of Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment on China’s environmental governance], \textit{当代世界} \textit{Contemporary World}, Vol. 1 (2010), p. 73.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Zhan Guang 占光.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Ibid. Also see Tong Lizhong 童立中, “Lianheguo huanjing guihuashu zai zhongguo juban dierci shamo zhiji xiyang” 联合国环境规划署在中国举办第二次沙漠化防治讲习班 [UNEP held the second seminar of combating desertification in China], \textit{Zhongguo shamo} 中国沙漠 \textit{Journal of Desert Research}, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1982), pp. 44-45.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Zhan Guang 占光.
\item \textsuperscript{59} “About the Global 500,” \textit{Global 500 Environmental Forum}, \texttt{http://www.global500.org/Pages/about-the-global-500.html} accessed on 15 October 2013.
\end{itemize}
award ceremony UNEP’s Executive Director Klaus Toepfer noted: “UNEP is indeed very proud to recognise the achievements of these ‘heroes’ in the front lines of global environmental action…In honouring the Global 500 laureates, UNEP hopes that others will be inspired by their extraordinary deeds.”

The normative framing of environmental achievements (“hero,” “laureate,” and “extraordinary deeds,” etc.) highlighted the social benefits of good environmental governance. In response to this normative recognition Chinese organisations and individuals have earned 28 awards to date. Some of awards are related to preserving biological diversity. For example, Shenzhen City was awarded the prize in 2002 for building an “ecological city,” particularly for its efforts to preserve and enhance biological diversity. People’s Daily emphasised Shenzhen’s experience in establishing a local environmental legal enforcement regime based on international environmental norms. In 2011, UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner praised “China’s great contribution” in environmental protection generally in an interview with Xinhua. He observed that “if you look at issues of environmental sustainability in China then and today, you see a fundamental transformation.…” The positive social approbation that UNEP has generated has no doubt made China more willing to comply with CBD and other international environmental norms as part of its shared responsibility to the global environment. In its official discourses, China has regarded the commitment to biodiversity part of its international obligation as a “responsible great power.”

To encourage the implementation of Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in individual countries, UNEP has also provided the normative support couple with social approbation.

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and recognition. After China’s ratified the biosafety protocol and completed the National Biosafety Framework project, UNEP awarded China a prize and reported this event in its official publication.65 This social approbation has led to material benefits GEF-funded demonstration projects on national biosafety been initiated in eight countries as well as China based on their commitments to the Cartagena Protocol.66 China was the only Asian country selected by the fund, which required China to internalise the norm of biosafety in local practice, by establishing a policy of biosafety and an operational regulatory regime, encouraging public participation and constructing a national Biosafety Clearing–House (BCH).67

Conference of the Parties (COP) of CBD

As the governing body of CBD, COP has also been an important norm leader socializing China into the CBD community and the supplementary Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. COP has a comprehensive set of institutions which it uses to promote biodiversity. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) serves as the CBD’s financial mechanism, providing financial support for norm localisation in member states. Under COP’s supervision, the CBD Secretariat organises meetings, prepares reports and assists member states with implementation.68 The official speech from CBD Secretariat often conveys the normative persuasion to the member states. For example, the Biosafety Protocol has been under much debate because it establishes considerable constraints upon the use of the genetic modified products. Many countries have not ratified the Protocol, and the local implementation process has been controversial. In its 2003 official publication, CBD Secretariat promoted the norm of biosafety by emphasising the obligation and duty of individual national policymakers and legislators by noting that the “ultimate responsibility” is on national governments to ensure biosafety.69 To encourage

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66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
the states’ participation, the Executive Secretary of CBD Secretariat, Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias urged “all Parties and other relevant biosafety stakeholders to redouble their commitments to contribute to ensuring an adequate level of protection in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms….“70

China’s decision to join the CBD, especially *Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety* can be largely explained by the social influence from the normative community. There was considerable domestic institutional disagreement with the government over ratifying the Protocol. To encourage ratification, COP provided China with the social rewards of normative recognition and support. The Executive Secretary of CBD Secretariat Dr Hamdallah Zedan praised China’s contribution in a GEF meeting in 2002. He noted that China had played a positive role in implementing CBD by actively participating in the COP meeting with Protocol negotiations. He pointed out that the CBD Secretariat, like many other international organisations along with broader international society, highly appreciated China’s efforts.71 He indicated that if China would ratify the Protocol, the first meeting of contracting party could be held in China.72 In 2003, Dr Hamdallah Zedan wrote to China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and praised China’s contribution again in implementing CBD.73 In a letter Dr Zedan observed that China’s ratification of the Protocol would greatly promote its agenda and norm of sustainable development.74 Following up on this recognition (i.e. a social reward for engaging in certain activities), Dr Zedan used normative persuasion to encourage Chinese action. He noted that if China, a large country with tremendous biodiversity, could ratify the Protocol at an early stage, it could play a leading role in biosafety at both national and international levels.75 Apart

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72 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
from UNEP and COP of CBD, some other international organisations have also sought to persuade China to join normative community of biosafety protocol. On 5 June 2003, the World Environment Day, Greenpeace International, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) delivered a joined statement in Beijing urging China to ratify the Protocol as soon as possible.  

**Individual States as Norm Leaders**

In the biodiversity and biosafety norm diffusion process international organisations are not the only “platforms” or “teachers” in the normative group. Individual states can also serve as norm leaders/entrepreneurs which can socialise a novice state. As discussed above, the network map and degree centrality calculation has placed France, Japan and Britain at the relatively central position within the international environmental regimes formed by nine international treaties. This centrality and norm leadership is evident in French and Japanese promotion of the CBD and the Protocol and it is likely that China’s decision to join the normative community was influenced by the micro-mechanisms of state socialization used by these states.

As a country with great biodiversity in its European and overseas territory, France has been a strong supporter of preserving biodiversity. It has established numerous organisations to research and promote biodiversity and biosafety, such as the French Foundation for Biodiversity Research (FRB) and the French Global Environmental Facility (FFEM). In international forums and across the international community, France has repeatedly advocated international cooperation and shared responsibilities in implementing CBD and the Protocol. French political leaders have employed normative language (such as “need” and “must”) in various international forums to promote the norms. For example, at a UNESCO Conference on “Biodiversity: Science and Governance” in 2005, French President Jacques Chirac called for a better understanding of the complexity of biodiversity. He noted that “…together with the immediate action which needs to be taken, we must also increase our knowledge of biodiversity and

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76 Ibid.
establish a basis recognized by all scientists, so that the international community can shoulder its responsibilities….”

He regarded biodiversity as “international public goods” and pointed out that the international community “must… be willing to bear and share part of the cost” of preserving it. Therefore, France was “committed to doing so,” and “every country must take concrete steps, particularly those that have exceptional biodiversity.”

Chirac further requested the international society to fulfill its commitment in protecting biodiversity and called for the creation of an intergovernmental panel on biodiversity change.

Japan has also played a role as a norm entrepreneur by actively participating in the implementation of the CBD and promoting the agreement’s normative values. In official discourse, the Japanese political leaders have framed biological diversity as an essential state responsibility of the international community. In an editorial of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan observed that “We bear a heavy burden of responsibility to pass down rich and diverse ecosystems to future generations….” He further noted that “it is now time for us to share the same recognition… and take concrete actions….”

At the 10th meeting of COP in 2010, Kan urged increased efforts within the United Nations system and recommended to initiation of the “United Nations Decade of Biodiversity.”

Japanese and French leadership in the norm localisation of biodiversity is also reflected in their close attention and financial assistance to developing countries. Focusing particularly on African nations, Japan has established “Japan Biodiversity Fund”

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79 “UNESCO - Speech by M. Chirac, President of the Republic, at the International Conference on ‘Biodiversity: Science and Governance’.”

80 Ibid.


and the Prime Minister Kan proposed a budget of USD$2 billion to support biodiversity projects in developing countries at the 2010 10\textsuperscript{th} meeting of COP.\textsuperscript{84} The Japanese government’s “strong leadership” was well-recognised by CBD Secretariat in the 2011 year reviews when Japan reaffirmed its USD $12 million contribution to assisting developing countries.\textsuperscript{85} France, the EU and Norway also announced additional financial contributions in 2010.\textsuperscript{86} The French contribution totalled of €1 million,\textsuperscript{87} and Japan pledged USD $1.2 million for member states in Asia-Pacific for a regional biosafety capacity-building project which covered China.\textsuperscript{88}

\textbf{China’s Responses: Mimicking and Identification}

For a novice state, it is essential to identify with the reference group and behave in a similar way with its “peer states” in order to survive or even be considered as a qualified member in the social group. China has not been unfamiliar with international influence in terms of environmental governance. Many Chinese environmental policies have been modelled on the legislative and regulatory practice of the United States, Japan, and other advanced industrialised countries.\textsuperscript{89} The normative persuasion and social influence from the international society has triggered China’s mimicking and identification behaviour during its socialisation processes into the international norm of biodiversity and biosafety. China’s decision-making to join CBD, especially the biosafety protocol, has been largely affected by the growing social pressure of an enlarging normative reference group with which China felt obliged to identify. At the third national meeting of CBD coordination group in 2001, it was evident that many in attendance had enacted domestic laws and regulations


\textsuperscript{89} Ross, p. 812.
to implement the Protocol and it was anticipated by the meeting that a great number of countries would ratify the Protocol in the coming year.\textsuperscript{90} And therefore China should take the initiative by ratifying the Protocol as early as it could.\textsuperscript{91} At the 2002 GEF meeting, Dr Hamdallah Zedan explicitly mentioned to China that 36 countries had already ratified the Protocol and he wished China to step forward and ratify the Protocol as well.\textsuperscript{92} By the end of 2003, many states had already ratified the Protocol, including many developing countries, like India, Brazil and South Africa. Since China often considers itself a developing country in international environmental regimes (as well as other regimes), these peer states’ ratifications increased social pressure on China to ratify. Indeed, in the brief report of Ministry of Environmental Protection, it was recognised that given that over 50 countries has ratified, it was a “very urgent” for China to all ratify and avoid any possible social isolation.\textsuperscript{93}

The fear of reputational damage, negative identification and status denial from the reference group are the other social factors that motivated China to ratify the Protocol. At the third national meeting of CBD coordination group, representatives pointed out that ratifying the Protocol would not only improve biosafety and public health, but also be “beneficial to enhance China’s international status and reputation.”\textsuperscript{94} A 2003 Ministry of Environmental Protection Brief suggested that as a country which ratified CBD early and played an important role in the negotiation process of the Protocol, China would draw intensive public and media attention.\textsuperscript{95} The brief then explicitly mentioned the problem

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\textsuperscript{90} “Disanci zhongguo lvxing shengwu duoyangxing gongzuoxietiaozuohuiyi zai jing zhaokei” 第三次中国履行《生物多样性公约》工作协调组会议在京召开 [The third coordination group meeting of implementing CBD was held in Beijing], \textit{Shewu duoyangxing jianbao} 生物多样性简报 [Brief report on CBD], Vol. 43 (2001), Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People’s Republic of China \url{http://sts.mep.gov.cn/swdyx_1/jianbao/200211/t20021118_83441.htm} accessed on 16 September 2013.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{92} “Gongyue zhixing mishu Hamdallah Zedan Xianshen laihua fangwen” 公约执行秘书 Hamdallah Zedan 先生来华访问 [Executive Secretary of CBD Secretariat Mr Hamdallah Zedan visited China].
\textsuperscript{93} “Shehui gejie dui woguo pizhun shengwu anquan yidingshu wenti de fanchang” 社会各界对我国批准《生物安全议定书》问题的反响 [the responses towards China’s ratification of biosafety protocol from social groups]. \textit{Shewu duoyangxing lvyue jianbao} 生物多样性履约简报 [Brief report on implementing CBD], Vol. 4 (2003), Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People’s Republic of China \url{http://sts.mep.gov.cn/swdyx_1/jianbao/200309/t20030930_62376.htm} accessed on 16 September 2013.
\textsuperscript{94} “Disanci zhongguo lvxing shengwu duoyangxing gongzuoxietiaozuohuiyi zai jing zhaokei” 第三次中国履行《生物多样性公约》工作协调组会议在京召开 [The third coordination group meeting of implementing CBD was held in Beijing].
\textsuperscript{95} “Shehui gejie dui woguo pizhun shengwu anquan yidingshu wenti de fanchang” 社会各界对我国批准《生物安全议定书》问题的反响 [the responses towards China’s ratification of biosafety protocol from social groups].
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of “China’s international image” in terms of joining biosafety protocol. It noted that as China had signed the Protocol two and a half years before (2000), it should ratify it as soon as possible because China had always been a country “keeping its word” in international society. Non-ratification would largely “undermine China’s international image and reputation”.

China’s socialisation in the international regimes of biodiversity and biosafety has not merely resulted in norm localisation in domestic context, but also has greatly shaped and redefined China’s preference and national interests in international environmental governance. With its increasing involvement into the norms of biodiversity and biosafety, China has adjusted its interpretation of its international responsibility according to the expectation of the normative society. From the unfamiliar concept of “environmental protection” in the 1970s to multitudinous domestic practice and international cooperation implementing CBD and biosafety protocol in the 1990s, China has gradually integrated the idea that preserving biodiversity is a component of its international duty and obligations as a “responsible great power.” In response to the requirement of CBD, China has established the Biodiversity Clearing-House System. On its official website, China justifies and explains its duty to the Convention in a normative language; the government “bears the responsibility” to protect and sustainably utilise biodiversity resources, and therefore it “must” develop the national biodiversity strategy and action plan which “would” be implemented within the broader context of national development. In its official discourses, China has reiterated its commitment to be a “responsible environmental great power” in international society and the willing to participate in international environmental cooperation. China has regarded biodiversity as a Chinese

96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
national interest and promoting CBD an essential component of China’s national grand strategy. The Chinese government believes that China’s “comprehensive national power” can in part be reflected by the state of China’s biodiversity and how well China preserves it. Based on this interpretation of national interest, China ratified biosafety protocol regardless of domestic bureaucratic disagreement.

China’s Socialisation into United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

One of the “Rio Conventions,” the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted at “Rio Earth Conference” along with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification in 1992. With the intent of “preventing dangerous human interference with the climate system,” UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994 and has 195 parties. The Protocol to UNFCCC was adopted in 1997 in Kyoto, and entered into force on 16 February 2005. The Kyoto Protocol commits its 192 Parties by setting internationally binding emission reduction targets for greenhouse gases (GHG). The Convention and the Protocol both place more obligations onto developed nations than developing states based on the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” which recognises that developed countries are mainly responsible for climate change due to early industrialisation and have more material capacity to tackle it. The industrialised countries (Annex I Parties) belong to OECD and are expected to cut the emission at a specific rate; while the developing countries (Non-annex I Parties) are not obliged to such commitment.

Not every state supports those two environmental treaties, especially Kyoto Protocol.

100 “Zhongguo lvxing shengwu dongyangxing gongyue shinian jinzhan” 中国履行《生物多样性公约》十年进展 [China’s progress in implementing CBD for ten years], 新华网 Xinhua, http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2003-05/19/content_875904.htm accessed on 16 September 2013; also see “Shenwu duoyangxing yu jianping—dui kechixu fazhan de tiaozhan” 生物多样性与减贫—对可持续发展的挑战 [Biodiversity and poverty alleviation-challenges for sustainable development].
101 Ibid.
For example, the United States has not yet ratified the Protocol; and Canada withdrew from it in 2012. As a “novice state” in international environmental regimes, China has experienced a “learning process” and been gradually socialised into the normative society. China ratified both the Convention and the Protocol early, even though those treaties have imposed substantial constrains on China’s national economic development. Yet because it has categorised itself as a developing country, China has enthusiastically promoted the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” in global environmental governance and tried to avoid legally binding limits in reducing GHG. Although there have been increasing air pollution-related disputes in China, domestic pressure cannot fully explain China’s climate change policy because of the government’s constrains on environmental activism.\(^\text{105}\) Chinese government has been motivated by the strategic growth industries to invest tremendously in renewable energy, which to some extent has contributed to climate change mitigation.\(^\text{106}\) However, material interests can hardly justify any international commitment of cutting carbon dioxide emissions, because it can impose significant constraints on economic development and gives China less space for political manoeuvre.\(^\text{107}\) This section discusses China’s engagement with UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol through the micro-processes of China’s socialisation in international environmental regimes and argues that social factors have had a significant impact on China’s climate change policy.

**Normative Persuasion and Social Influence**

The United Nations has served as one of the main “norm leaders” of climate change by conducting normative persuasion. The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has repeatedly pointed out that climate change is a matter of great urgency and has advocated

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\(^{107}\) For example, in November 2009, China’s State Council announced that China would reduce GHG emission by 40-45% by 2020 compared with the GHG emission level in 2005. See Zhu Jianhong 朱剑红,”2020nian woguo kongzhi wenshi qiti paifang xingdong mubiao queding: yingdui qihou bianhua, zhongguo jiji fuze” 2020 年我国控制温室气体排放行动目标确定: 应对气候变化,中国积极负责 [China’s decision has been made about the acting target of reducing GHG by 2020: China is active and responsible to tackle climate change issues]. Renmin wang 人民网 People, http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/10460646.html accessed on 18 November 2013.
the international commitments from each Parties of Conference. Addressing the UN Security Council in 2007, Ban Ki-moon stated that international society “must focus more clearly on the benefits of early action.”\textsuperscript{108} In his remarks at The University of Auckland in September 2011, Ban noted that “climate change is not about tomorrow”; instead, “it is lapping at our feet.”\textsuperscript{109} In 2013, Ban addressed the 19\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of Parties of Conference of UNFCCC and used strong normative language to persuade member states for more effort in reducing emissions of GHG. He stated that “those countries that have not yet done so should swiftly ratify the second commitment of the Kyoto Protocol” and he urged the Parties “to construct an action agenda to meet the climate challenge. Current pledges are simply inadequate. Here, too, we must set the bar higher.”\textsuperscript{110} UNFCCC officials have also promoted international environmental norms in numerous public addresses. For example, in 2013 the Executive Secretary of UNFCCC, Christiana Figueres, urged world coal industries to “leverage technology to reduce emission across the entire coal value chain.”\textsuperscript{111}

Some states have also played roles as “norm entrepreneurs” in global governance of climate change. Surveying the official discourses of the major world powers who have addressed the UN General Assembly and Security Council since 1997 when the Kyoto Protocol was adopted, this study found that France, Japan and Britain have engaged in normative persuasion about climate change policy. First, these norm leaders emphasised the urgency and seriousness of climate change as the initial step of socialising novice states. French representative Mr De La Sablière spoke in UN Security Council that the international society “must act without delay” to deal with climate change as “a matter of urgency” and “must mobilise and find responses to the challenge in all its aspects.”\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{109} Author’s own notes taken from Ban Ki-moon’s public address at The University of Auckland on 6 September 2011.
\textsuperscript{112} UN Security Council, 5663\textsuperscript{th} Meeting, pp. 11-12.
Japanese delegate also stated in UN General Assembly that the international community “need to tackle climate without pause….“

Second, French and Britain highlighted the “global partnership” to deal with climate change as a “shared responsibility,” and thus conveyed social pressures to engage novice states. In 1999 UN General Assembly session, French Ambassador Mr Dejammet stressed French commitments to small island developing countries in mitigating climate change. He spoke that “France is determined to reinforce its partnership with the small island developing states so as to provide them with bilateral and multilateral assistance.”

Britain has emphasised the “collective responsibilities” of all the nations to tackle climate change including both developed and developing states. British delegate Mrs Beckett advocated for a “global basis for climate security” where each country “assume[s] their own share of the responsibility” at the UN General Assembly in 2006. She noted that the international community “must all be ready to find a way to get the agenda moving beyond Kyoto.” Following this normative persuasion, the British representative explicitly mentioned China as “a specific example” to demonstrate that “a rapidly increasing use of the fossil fuels” is “increasing climate change” even though Chinese people are “benefiting from the great success of the Chinese economy.”

Without much obvious opprobrium this discourse exerted direct social pressure on China and urged it to “find path for economic growth that will protect our climate.” The European Union and China have established the EU-China Partnership on Climate Change in 2005 to strengthen cooperation and dialogue on climate change between the two parties, especially on the technology which could be utilized to substantially reduce CO₂ emissions.

Third, compared to other Annex I countries, Japan has not hesitated to acknowledge its responsibilities in mitigating climate change and have taken a leading role in different

114 UN General Assembly, 22nd special session, 2nd Plenary Meeting (A/S-22/PV.2) 27 September 1999, p. 28.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid., p. 21.
118 Ibid.
aspects of the implementation debate. In 2007, the Japanese representative told the UN General Assembly that “Japan is determined to take leadership role on climate-change issue through hosting the Group of 8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit…”\(^\text{120}\) In a 2008 UN General Debate, the Japanese representative Mr Sumi emphasised that “Japan was committed to performing a leadership role in the efforts to address climate change” by assisting developing countries.\(^\text{121}\) Japan’s normative commitments in international environmental governance have been closely related to its agenda of pursuing the international status as a great political power beyond its economic significance in the world. Addressing the General Assembly in 2010, the Japanese delegate Mr Kodama expressed Japan’s willingness to coordinate with the United Nations and “lead international negotiation for the success of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Cancún, Mexico.”\(^\text{122}\) He also conveyed Japan’s continuous support to developing countries in climate change policy. After emphasising its contribution in climate change mitigation, Japan further requested a reform for UN Security Council to expand both permanent and non-permanent memberships.\(^\text{123}\)

**Mimicking and Identification: Which is the Reference Group?**

A successful state socialisation process requires the novice state to positively identify itself with the normative group in response to the normative persuasion and social influence from the “norm entrepreneurs.” Based on this identification, the novice state would “copy” the other members’ behaviour in the normative community and make pro-norm choices in order to be accepted as “qualified member” by the reference group. Norm contestation could occur during the micro-process of identification and largely determine to which reference group that the novice state would consider itself belonging. Observing China’s socialisation into international environmental regimes, this study has revealed a dichotomy in China’s group identification. This dichotomy throws some light

\(^\text{120}\) UN General Assembly, 62\(^{\text{nd}}\) session, 21st Plenary Meeting (A/62/PV.21) 8 October 2007, p. 13.
\(^\text{121}\) UN General Assembly, 63\(^{\text{rd}}\) session, “General Debate” (A/C.2/63/SR.3) 17 October 2008, p. 2.
\(^\text{122}\) UN General Assembly, 65\(^{\text{th}}\) session, 25\(^{\text{th}}\) Plenary Meeting (A/65/PV.25), p. 5
\(^\text{123}\) Ibid., p. 6.
on the inconsistency of China’s environmental diplomacy, and can partially explain why China is sometimes praised due to its commitment in reducing GHG emission, while at other times it is regarded as a “laggard” state with an uncooperative attitude in the global governance of climate change.\textsuperscript{124}

On one hand, China seeks to enhance its reputation and establish its status as a “responsible great power” in international community. The “responsible state” membership is intimately related to the normative standards of state behaviour in international environmental regimes. Wishing to be perceived as a “responsible state,” China has experienced increasing social pressure from the normative group and feels obliged to contribute to climate change mitigation. For example, Sha Zukang, China’s UN undersecretary-General for economic and social affairs revealed in an interview that “the climate change conference in Copenhagen implies higher expectation held by the outside world on China…”\textsuperscript{126} Therefore, China has repeatedly acknowledged its responsibility in climate change and announced environmental protection as one of its “basic national policies” in the official discourses.\textsuperscript{127} Former The President Hu Jintao remarked at the Major Economies Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change in 2008 that “the Chinese government, with a responsible attitude towards the Chinese people and peoples of the whole world, takes climate change very seriously.”\textsuperscript{128} Speaking at the Collective Meeting of Leaders of Five Developing Countries on the same year, Hu encouraged the major developing countries to “work together to fulfil our responsibilities” and “exert positive influence on global affairs.”\textsuperscript{129}


\textsuperscript{125} Ong, p. 1141.


China is more likely to identify with the normative community when the community can create substantial “peer pressure.” By 2009, many countries have localised the international expectation of cutting carbon dioxide emission into their national action plans. In 2009 the European Union announced its commitment to reduce the emission by at least 20% of 1990 level by 2020, and urged developing countries to “limit growth in their collective emissions to 15-30%.” The same year Brazil proposed a voluntary reduction of 38%-40% by 2020. Other countries, such as India, South Africa, Mexico, Indonesia and Korea, also announced their action commitments in the following several months. To avoid becoming an isolated minority party in international society, China which identified with the normative group made a similar emission reduction plan. In September, President Hu Jintao addressed the UN General Assembly and suggested China’s willingness to make an international binding commitment in reducing carbon dioxide emission “by a notable margin by 2020 from the 2005 level.” On 26 November 2009 soon after President Obama announced a US plan to reduce the greenhouse gases to 17% below 2005 level by 2020, the Chinese State Council decided that by 2020 China’s carbon dioxide emission per unit of GDP should decrease by 40%-50%. And this percentage would serve as a binding indicator in China’s national economic and social development plans in medium and long-term. Xie Zhenhua, the vice director of China’s National Development and Reform Commission spoke at the press conference after the State Council decision noting that China’s commitment had shown China’s “extremely responsible attitude” towards climate change and noted that

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135 Ibid.
such attitude would not only benefit the Chinese people but also people across the globe.\footnote{Ibid.}

The identification with the normative group has facilitated the process by which the international norms of climate change passes through the domestic “filter” and is localised into China’s legal system and national policy. In August 2009, at the 10th session of the Standing Committee of the 11th National People’s Congress, the Standing Committee approved China’s first climate change resolution. At the meeting’s close, China’s former top legislature Wu Bangguo spoke that “as a responsible nation” China had to focus on energy efficiency and environmental protection and establish them as “basic state policies.”\footnote{Ibid.} Achieving “sustainable development” has been regarded as China’s “national strategy,” according to Wu.\footnote{Ibid.} In 2011 the Chinese government published the 12th Five-Year Plan for National Economics and Social Development emphasising policies aimed at ameliorating climate change such as educing of GHG emission, building adaptive capacity and participating in international cooperation.\footnote{“Guomin jingji he shehui fazhan di shierge wunian guihua gangyao” [The 12th Five-year Plan for National Economic and Social Development], The Central People’s Government of People’s Republic of China, 16 March 2011 \url{http://www.gov.cn/2011lh/content_1825838_7.htm} accessed on 5 December 2013.}

Yet despite these efforts and the discourse of responsibility China has always emphasised its status as a “low income developing country” in global environmental governance, and has kept a wary eye on the normative community which is mainly subscribed to by Western developed countries. As such, when it comes to any specific emission cuts or hard legally binding objectives, China has been more likely to identify itself as a developing state and cooperate with other developing states, such as “Group of 77,” to avoid any international binding obligations. From a rationalist international relations perspective such an position is unsurprising and pragmatic – material benefits (accompanied by large scale CO$_2$ emissions and extensive energy use) have driven China’s approach to climate change; and China would very likely to withdraw from its international responsibility in climate change when it constrains economic development.
As Su Wei, the director-general of Office of National Leading Group on Climate Change, has suggested, China as a “politically and morally responsible country” takes climate change “very seriously”; and “will do what we should do and will do what we can do.”140 After all, China always advocates “a balance between environmental protection and resources development” in international environmental governance.141

However, state socialisation theory can argue against this material essentialist perspective because it can explain the inconsistency of China’s behaviour in climate change without reducing all Chinese rhetoric, official discourses and policies to a mere show. First, a novice state, like China, tends to choose the reference group that can distribute more social benefits to the “qualified members” and exert more social pressure to “non-cooperative players.” Therefore, the size of the reference groups matters. Usually, a large normative community can generate more social influence. The current normative group of climate change is hardly a unified one as is characterized with a low degree of consensus. Major industrial countries in the world, such as the United States, Canada and Australia, have not yet reached an agreement concerning their individual responsibilities for reducing greenhouse sessions. This lack of agreement which includes both of the amount of cuts, the feasibility and usefulness of such cuts, and relative sharing of cuts across various states, is complicated by the fact that large developing countries, such as China, Brazil and India, also hold different opinions towards climate change regimes.142

The relatively small size of the normative group, coupled with the absence of several major powers can create neither enough social benefit nor punishment to attract or regulate the novice states. Under these circumstances, there is little social cost and much material benefit in choosing to associate with developing countries as its reference group. Given their low capacity to deal with climate change and the historical responsibility developed states have, developing states are not obliged to bear the same responsibility as the industrialised countries. Second, state socialisation is not a static phenomenon but is

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constructed in a dynamic social environment where different ideas, values and norms are competing with each other. As a great power with the largest carbon dioxide emissions in the world, Chinese climate change policy is not only shaped by the international expectations, but can also greatly influence the evolution of international norm. Surveying China’s official discourses about climate change, this study finds that China often employs normative language when it attempts to promote its own agenda in international environmental regimes. China has already reached the central position in the environmental network since the middle of the 2000s. With increasing social power and prestige in the network, China could contribute to “norm contestation” process by adding more “Chinese values” into the development and substantive content of environmental norms.

China’s Responses: Environmental Norms with “Chinese Characteristics”?

“Common but Differentiated Responsibilities”

In nearly every Chinese official UN statement addressing climate change and state’s obligation, China upholds the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” even though many industrialised countries, such as the Unite States, are reluctant to regard it as a prescriptive norm or customary international law. This principle has provided asymmetrical rights and obligations regarding global environmental governance. The concept of “common responsibility” is rooted in the notion of “common concern” and “common heritage of mankind.”\(^{143}\) The early application of this idea in international law can be traced back to the 1950s and involves the conservation of many types of natural heritage and resources, including tuna and other fish, outer space, waterfowl, wild animals, seabed and ocean floor, and subsoil.\(^{144}\) The recent emphasis of this concept is reflected in the major international environmental treaties. The Convention on Biological Diversity affirms that “the conservation of biological diversity is a common concern of


mankind.” Similarly, the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* acknowledges climate change and its adverse effects are “a common concern of mankind.” The commonality character requires certain legal responsibilities to be attributed to all States and a shared burden and solidarity in protecting global environment. Based on the common responsibility, all the member states should participate in the formulation and implementation of international environmental treaties in a collaborative “global partnership.”

Nevertheless, common and shared state responsibilities do not necessarily lead to equal obligations among them. The legal practice of differential demands in international treaties is not unusual. For example, in Part XIII of the *Treaty of Peace of Versailles* (1919), the International Labour Organisation recognised the difficulty in achieving the uniformity in labour conditions due to “differences of climate, habits and customs, of economic opportunities and industrial tradition.” Despite the lack of binding obligations, in 1986 The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) has also provided for differential treatment between developing and developed countries. In Part IV “Trade and Development,” GATT requires the developed parties not to “expect reciprocity” when they make commitments “in trade negotiations to reduce or remove tariffs and other barriers” with less-developed contracting parties. International environmental regimes have created many non-uniform obligations with practical values.

Stockholm Declaration of United Nations Conference on Human Environment (1972) endorses the special demands from the developing countries in Principle 12 by “taking

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into account the circumstances and particular requirements of developing countries” and offering them “additional international technical and financial assistance.” The Article 5 of Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987) entitles developing countries a delay of ten years for its implementation with the control measures.

The first unambiguous adoption of “common but differentiated responsibilities” at a principle of international environmental regimes was at the Rio Conference. This notion takes into account of the collective duty of all the members, the historical differences in their contribution to the specific problem and the present capability to remedy the problem. Principle 7 of Rio Declaration on Environment and Development explicitly recognises states’ “common but differentiated responsibilities” in environmental governance based on their “different contributions to global environmental degradation,” “the pressures their societies place on the global environment” and “the technologies and financial resources they command.” UNFCCC provides in Article 3 that all parties should protect the climate system “on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities,” and therefore states the developed countries “should take the lead in combating climate change the adverse effects.” The Kyoto Protocol reaffirms states’ common but differentiated responsibilities in Article 10 by requiring joint action from all parties and in Annex I, the developed countries oblige themselves to the collective binding commitment of reducing greenhouse gases. The idea of “common but differentiated responsibilities” in those environmental treaties serves as an inducement for more hesitant and less able developing countries to sign and implement the environmental norms based on the spirit of “global

partnership” that the contracting parties assist each other to achieve sustainable
development.\footnote{French, p. 46.}

In principle, the international community subscribes to the notion of common but
differentiated responsibilities for respective member states in principle. However, there
are divergent interpretations of this concept. The industrial states, represented by the
United States, have envisioned the interpretation and implementation of “common but
differentiated responsibilities” in a manner which does not preclude developing countries
from avoiding major economic or policy changes which must be undertaken to prevent
climatic change. First, most developed countries, in particular the United States, have
questioned the inclusion of Article 3 in the UNFCCC due to the uncertainty of the legal
obligations it creates and the possibility that the principle will become a part of customary
international law.\footnote{Lavanya Rajamani, “The Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibility and the Balance of Commitments under the Climate Regime,” \textit{RECIEL}, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2000), p. 124.} The United States has initiated several changes to Article 3 to ensure
that the principle applies only to the Convention, and seeks to prevent it from potentially
is absent from the text of Article 3 and only appears in the title of the article.\footnote{Ibid.} A further American suggestion attempted to reduce the legal significance of the term
“principles” in the title by including a footnote to Article 1 which reads “[t]itles of
articles are included solely to assist the reader.”\footnote{Ibid.; also see United Nations, \textit{United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change}, 1992, p. 8.} Second, with the support of several
Annex I members such as Japan, Canada, Norway and New Zealand, the United States
has tried to define the developing countries’ responsibilities in climate change as
“meaningful participation” through “voluntary commitment.”\footnote{Rajamani, p. 128.} From this perspective,
the differential responsibilities “in view of different contribution to global environmental
degradation” under Principle 7 of Rio Declaration opens the possibility that some
developing countries will be obliged to bear more responsibilities when their high
economic growth produces increased environmental problems.\footnote{French, p. 50.}

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{French, p. 46.}
  \item \footnote{Ibid.}
  \item \footnote{Ibid.; also see United Nations, \textit{United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change}, 1992, p. 8.}
  \item \footnote{Rajamani, p. 128.}
  \item \footnote{French, p. 50.}
\end{itemize}
State Stuart Eizenstat spoke to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and articulated the idea that “developing countries may… as a prerequisite for engaging in emissions trading, voluntarily assume binding emissions targets through amendment to the annex of the Protocol that lists countries with targets.”166 New Zealand has also called for developing counties to “progressively engage with binding emissions limitations according to their relative levels of development.” As a state moves up the development ladder, the greater the voluntary commitment to reduce emissions.167

Subscribing to a different notion of common but differentiated responsibilities argued by the Americans, China perceives the principle as the “consensus of the international community” and the “foundation for international cooperation to respond to climate change.”168 Employing normative language, China has promoted the principle as a basic norm that “all parties should adhere to” in climate change regimes.169 Former President Hu Jintao stated that “our endeavour to combat climate change should be guided by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities” since countries “differ in terms of stage of development, level of scientific and technological development and national conditions.”170 Expressing China’s support to Kyoto Protocol at the UN Bali Climate Change Conference, Mr Su Wei, China’s Director-general of Office of National Leading Group on Climate Change, noted that “any future arrangement on climate change should continue to follow the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities established in the Convention.”171

China understands the common but differentiated responsibilities concept based on three major premises. First, the major responsibility for climate change mitigation is

always on developed countries. In a 2005 letter to UN Secretary-General, China’s UN Permanent Representative Wang Guangya suggested that developed countries “should take the lead in adopting measures to reduce emissions after 2012 in continued compliance with the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities.”\textsuperscript{172} In contrast to the suggestion that developed countries should reduce emissions, Wang argued that developing countries should be provided “measurable, reportable and verifiable assistance” with regard to “financial resources, technology and capacity building.”\textsuperscript{173} Second, China and other developing countries reject any binding international commitment to reduce emissions or implement any policy which many affect climate change. In the second review of the adequacy of Annex I party commitments, China explicitly stated that “developing countries would not accept new commitments under any guise” to eliminate any possibility of future binding commitments.\textsuperscript{174} Third, China values economic development and has been seeking to “achieve development while responding successfully to climate change.”\textsuperscript{175} Addressing the UN General Assembly, Chinese ambassador Wang Min highlighted “full consideration to economic development, the eradication of poverty and climate protection.”\textsuperscript{176} He emphasised the importance of approaching climate change based on respect for “developing countries’ right to development.”\textsuperscript{177} As a developing country, China “should take a development route featuring the coordination between economic growth and environmental protection while expanding our economy and eradicating poverty.”\textsuperscript{178}

\textit{Securitisation of Climate Change}

In recent years the international community has included and increasingly emphasised the security implications of climate change.\textsuperscript{179} Indeed, the major Western powers have attempted to securitise climate change and even frame it as “a matter of

\textsuperscript{172} UN General Assembly, 59th session, “Letter dated 8 June 2005 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General” (A/59/842), 10 June 2005, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{173} UN General Assembly, 62nd session, 81\textsuperscript{st} Plenary Meeting (A/62/PV.81), 12 February 2008, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{175} UN General Assembly, 65\textsuperscript{th} session, 25\textsuperscript{th} Plenary Meeting (A/65/PV.25), p. 7.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{178} Liu Jiang.
In the United States and European Union, it has become accepted that climate change and security are closely connected. Those countries have made use of intensive normative persuasion to socialise those that have not yet identified with this reference group. On behalf of European Union, Mr Metela from Czech Republic spoke at the General Assembly about the security implications of climate change. He explained that climate change was “an immediate threat to survival” for some countries. And the EU regarded climate change as “a universal threat that will create new security dynamics and risks in all regions.” Therefore the international community should focus the attention on “security risks related to climate change in the multilateral arena.” The American ambassador emphasised Secretary of State Clinton’s address that “the crisis of climate change exists at the nexus of diplomacy, national security and development. It is an environmental issue, a health issue, an economic issue, energy issue, and a security issue.” Australian delegate also suggested that climate change was likely to “exacerbate the intensity and complexity of security-related risks”

China has opposed the securitisation of climate change and seeks to disavow or de-emphasise a connection between climate change and national security. Generally, it has denied the security implication of climate change based on the concern that possible security tools, such as military intervention by Western great powers, may be applied to China’s internal affairs. In various international forums, China has repeatedly argued that “climate change is an issue of sustainable development rather than a security issue,” and it should be addressed by international bodies which are responsible for sustainable development. Nevertheless, experiencing normative expectation and an enlarged reference group which adopted General Assembly resolution 63/281 (“Climate change

182 UN General Assembly, 63th session, 85th Plenary Meeting (A/63/PV. 85), 3 June 2009, p. 5.
183 Ibid.
184 Ibid.
185 Ibid., p. 19.
186 Ibid., p. 10.
187 Gerald Chan, Pak K lee, Lai-Ha Chan, p. 305.
188 UN General Assembly, 63th session, 85th Plenary Meeting (A/63/PV. 85), 3 June 2009, p. 21.

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and its possible security implications”) in 2009, China acknowledged a certain association between climate change and human security. It has recognised that global climate change has been “profoundly affecting human survival and development.” Yet, China remains suspicious over this expanded definition of human security and indicates that climate change it is within the non-security range of state’s internal affairs and domestic responsibility. In UN General Assembly in 2010, Chinese delegate Mr La Yifan noted that there has been “no uniform international agreement” on the concept of human security, and argued that a national state government should bear the “primary responsibility for protecting human security,” such as dealing with “infectious diseases, climate change and violent conflicts.”

Major Western powers have tried to engage UN Security Council into the climate change regimes based on the “understanding of the effects of climate change on security.” At the UN Security Council in 2011, the British representative believed that “the Council can best fulfil its responsibility” to “new and cross-cutting security challenges, including the effects of climate change.” The French delegate also supported the consideration of the “implication[s] of climate change for maintaining international peace and security.” He noted that the Security Council “must…assume its responsibilities…in conformity with its mandate.” Besides the normative persuasion, the US representative also tried to exert social pressure on those states expanding the security implications of climate change by employing the social punishment of strong opprobrium. Ms Rice spoke that the “refusal of a few to accept our responsibility” through Security Council had been “more than disappointment”; it was “pathetic, short-sighted and, frankly, a dereliction of duty.”

190 UN General Assembly, 64th session, 89th Plenary Meeting (A/65/PV. 89), 21 May 2010, p. 22.
191 Ibid.
194 Ibid., p. 15.
195 Ibid.
196 Ibid., p. 7.
However, the American and European idea that China can be socialised in a straightforward way by fully embracing their “environmental norms” may be unrealistic. Along with some other developing countries, China prefers to deal with climate change within the framework of UNFCCC. The Chinese delegate in UN Security Council explicitly noted that climate change was “fundamentally a sustainable development issue,” and the Security Council did not possess “expertise in climate change and the necessary means and resources.”\textsuperscript{197} Moreover, the Council was not “a forum for decision-making with universal representation.”\textsuperscript{198} China was not alone in casting doubt on the securitisation of climate change and disagrees with UN Security Council’s involvement. In 2011 the Brazilian representative argued to the Security Council that the possible security implications of climate change were “far less obvious”; and therefore security tools were “ill-suited to facing climate change” even though they were appropriate to deal with “specific threats to international peace and security.”\textsuperscript{199} An Indian delegate also noted that UNFCCC was the suitable forum to address climate change issues “with a toolbox of ways and means,” none of which was available to the Security Council.\textsuperscript{200} According to the Indian delegate, any security tools which included the “imposition of punitive measures” were not helpful in dealing with climate change.\textsuperscript{201} The Russia ambassador explicitly expressed its suspicions about “the repeated attempts” to place climate change on the agenda of Security Council, and pointed out that the adoption of resolution 63/281 was not sufficient to justify any consideration of climate change in the Security Council.\textsuperscript{202}

\textbf{Conclusion}

This chapter examines China’s state socialisation into the international environmental regimes. The social network mapping of nine major powers’ participation in nine main

\textsuperscript{197} Ibid., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{199} UN Security Council, 6668\textsuperscript{th} Meeting, “Maintenance of International Peace and Security” (S/PV.6668), 23 November 2011, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid., p. 23.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{202} UN Security Council, 6587\textsuperscript{th} Meeting, “Maintenance of International Peace and Security” (S/PV.6587), 20 July 2011, p. 13.
international environmental treaties has identified three sub-groups by calculating degree centrality of the network. Japan, France and Britain have been located at the central position of the network through 2001 to 2005, and are more likely to possess more social powers and be the norm leaders in the community. China, Brazil and India have shown a “catch-up” effect and quickly moved from the periphery to the centre of the network. As the novices of the group, they could receive social pressure from the norm leaders. Russia and the United States are still at the marginal place in this social group. The network analysis has also revealed that China tends to join the environmental treaties at the “norm cascade” period, which suggests that it may be sensitive with the persuasion and social influence from the enlarging normative community. This feature of China’s participation in environmental regimes makes it a suitable case to investigate state socialisation into international norms.

Compared to its Western counterparts, the Chinese government has not faced much domestic demand to improve biodiversity and biosafety, or mitigate climate change. The environmental treaties in biodiversity and climate change have placed substantial constraints on China’s social and economic development. With little domestic pressure and lessened material benefits, China’s participation in international environmental regimes can be better explained by the social factors created by the normative community. China’s early socialisation in international environmental forums in the early 1970s was largely determined by the elite learning. Chinese political leaders, represented by Premier Zhou Enlai, have learned the concept of “environmental protection” from the Western countries, especially the United States and Japan. The first Chinese official environmental body was established to accommodate preparatory work for the Stockholm Conference in 1972.

China’s compliance with international environmental regimes of biodiversity has been greatly influenced by the normative persuasion and social pressure from the normative group and associated institutions. UNEP and COP of CBD have distributed many social benefits to reward China’s pro-norm behaviour. The study suggests that Japan and France, at the central position of the network, have served as the norm entrepreneurs to facilitate China’s socialisation. Under the peer pressure of Brazil and
India, China has ratified the biosafety protocol to avoid any reputational damage and isolation in the international community. Given this international expectation, China has redefined its national interest and preferences by announcing it will pursue a status of “responsible environmental great power.” In terms of the international regimes of climate change, the international community has demonstrated diverse interests and seems to be less appealing to novice states. The United Nations and COP of UNFCCC have played the role as norm leaders in the micro-processes of state socialisation. The individual states with high degree centrality in the network have also provided persuasion and social influence to China. Britain and France have emphasised the “collective responsibility”; while Japan has highlighted its leadership in climate change regimes. Despite these social factors, China along with other major states have not fully subscribed to the normative community; nor may the implications of climate change have for the economic development or security.

China’s responses to climate change have suggested a combination of material and social interests and a process of “norm contestation.” On one hand, China has been sensitive to the social influence from the normative group and acknowledged the international expectation of being a “responsible power.” This identification with the normative community has generated some commitment and compliant behaviour to mitigate climate change. On the other hand, China has usually avoided making binding international commitments based on its self-identification as a “low-income developing country.” China has promoted the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” as a “fundamental norm” in climate change regime; whereas many industrial states are reluctant to consider this principle as customary international law and tend to restrain the application of this concept. In recent years, some Western countries, such as the United States, Britain and France, have attempted to securitise climate change as a matter of national security, and engage UN Security Council to address those issues related to climate change using various security tools. However, China has repeatedly iterated that climate change is solely a “sustainable development issue” and argued that the Security Council is not a suitable forum. China’s position has been supported by many developing countries, such as India and Brazil. It may be too early to decide whether China can
formalise a reference group with itself in the central position to compete with normative group of most industrial countries. In future international environmental regimes, given its economic growth China is likely to be more accommodating to the expectation of international society and address the “current contribution” to climate change as a big developing country. Nevertheless, international society should not expect China to fully comply with the environmental norms created by developed countries and, as part of this ongoing process and dialogue, it is likely that there will be an additional norm evolution process which will result in international norms having more “Chinese characteristics.”
CONCLUSION

A Responsible Power as a Social State

States do not always know what their international responsibilities are. They develop understandings of desirable responsibilities from the international community with which they interact and identify. They are socialised to accept the responsibilities expected by this community. This study examines China’s development as a responsible power in international society through a social constructivist approach. It depicts and analyses China’s desire to be “responsible power” in the international community in a dynamic social and political context. Establishing the theoretical framework based on existing socialisation literature, this project aims to trace and track the processes of how the international community has socialised China into the concept of “state responsibility” and how China has responded to this normative engagement. It provides an additional perspective to explain how China has understood its state responsibilities and acted upon them in the absence of substantial material incentives. Emphasising the ideational factors in China’s international relations, it argues that China has been socialised into the normative society and gradually adopted the international standards of “state responsibility.” This external expectation has largely shaped China’s interpretation of “responsible power” since 1978 and been reflected on its behaviour in foreign affairs.

Conceptualising China as a “Responsible Power”

Rationalists understand state interests and preferences to be shaped by self-interested material calculation. From this perspective, the concept of China as a “responsible power” is either an empty political rhetoric to overbalance the “China threat theory” or a deliberate decision to benefit materially from the “non zero-sum repeated games” in various international arrangements. Instead of the materialist coercion, sanction and inducement, the social constructivist approach investigates the social factors that can shape and change state behaviour in international society. This social approach has been support by various studies which suggest that the concept of “responsible power” has
been a new element of China’s national identity which is neither the result of material factors nor simply a rhetorical legerdemain to make Chinese international policy seem less threatening. However, those studies can hardly provide the source of this new evolving identity or empirically bolster this argument.

According to the “state-above-society” model, this thesis emphasises the Chinese government’s primary role in China’s international socialisation. It argues that due to China’s relatively recent engagement with the international community it is for the most part a “novice” state in the international community. The micro-processes of socialisation (discussed in the case studies) illustrate how the international norms of “state responsibility” reach China and affect it. Norm entrepreneurs, states and/or international organisations, use normative persuasion to convince novice states, such as China, to accept certain beliefs or values and modify their behaviour accordingly. These norm leaders tend to construct an appealing cognitive frame through communicative actions to facilitate successful persuasion. These norms leaders also use social influence to affect state behaviour. Social influence is different from persuasion, which shapes states’ behaviour by changing their mind, because it does not necessarily lead to a genuine adoption of social norms. Rather the state ascribes to the value or engages in a policy expected by the international society because it can reap social benefits and avoid social costs. When novice states have decided with which reference group they identify, they then emulate the group members and behave in a “pro-norm” way to navigate in the social network. The larger size of the reference group is, the more likely the novice states would comply with the social norm.

Given this theoretical perspective and the evidence from the content analysis and case studies in the thesis, it is evident that China’s interpretation of state responsibility is greatly influenced by the normative community. First, China would embrace some of the international standards of responsibility when it is convinced by norm leaders that those are the “right thing to do.” Second, China has chosen to fulfil some responsibilities in order to gain normative praise and support, and on the other hand, avoid social opprobrium and status denial. Third, China has interpreted its state responsibility in a manner similar to those states or social group with which it identifies. Fourth, when China
faces a large and unified reference group, it tends to be more sensitive to social pressure and is more likely to articulate its responsibility according to international expectations.

**Interpreting China’s State Responsibility**

The concept of “responsible power” and the obligations such a concept requires of states in the international society is never static. The dynamic social and political context transmogrifies both core and ancillary meanings and obligations. Immediately after the Second World War, the international community highlighted that respect for state sovereignty and a non-intervention within the domestic affairs of a state were the main obligations and duties of responsible states (Phase One). Since the 1980s when many international organisations and institutions began to play more active, independent and essential roles in international relations, the notion was re-conceived to include the idea that a “responsible power” should actively participate in international regimes and make contribution to various international arrangements (Phase Two). After the Cold War, the international society has paid more attention to individual welfare and human security (Phase Three). The state responsibility, therefore, has been broadened to include promoting global common value of human rights and representative democracy.

In concert with these international developments, China’s definition of “responsible power” has evolved greatly during the past three decades. Based on the English official newsmagazine *Beijing Review* from 1978 to 2010, this study conducts a content analysis and provides two findings. First, the analysis suggests that in the mid-1990s China’s interpretation of state responsibility transformed from the commitment to world peace and stability and non-intervention rules to the involvement international regimes. Second, there has not been a clear transition towards the more recent post-Cold War definition of state responsibility in protecting individual rights, even though there are increasing discourses advocating the values of human rights and democracy. As such the content analysis reveals that China’s interpretation of state responsibility is a combination of the commitment to norms of sovereignty and non-intervention, and the willingness to participate in international regimes.

The discourse analysis on the same sample texts has demonstrated three implications
of China’s interpretation of state responsibility. First, China’s official discourse adopts the normative language to describe its duties and obligations in international society, which suggests an altruistic attitude as the necessary characteristic of a responsible state. Second, China has shown increasing confidence and ambitions in terms of shouldering international responsibility. Emphasising its “great power” status, China has been more likely to hold itself on the same footing with the other global powers and acknowledge its “shared responsibility” with them. Third, China’s “responsible power” image is not always clear. Due to its pragmatic policymaking tradition, China tends to ascribe to various international responsibilities selectively and has sought a balance between normative commitment and practical interest. The ambiguity in its responsibility discourse leaves China much space for diplomatic manoeuvre.

Practising State Responsibility in the Social Context

The findings of content analysis suggest two empirical puzzles. First, to what extent has China recognised the responsibility expected by the international society in its human rights diplomacy; and second, to what extent has China been socialised into various international regimes as a “status quo” power and fulfilled its responsibilities in them. To shed further light on these puzzles, Chapters Four and Five are case studies which seek to closely observe how China performs its state responsibilities in the social context.

Human Rights Diplomacy

The “Arab Spring” has created a new wave of norm diffusion in the Middle East and North Africa in support of individual freedom and democratic governance. In the face of massive protests and civil war which attended the Libyan and Syrian uprisings, the international community sought to intervene in Libya and Syria to prevent the massive governmental violation of human rights – a position consistent with post-cold war normative developments of the idea of international responsibility based on democratic governance and human rights. As a permanent member in the UN Security Council, China’s vote could largely determine the legitimacy of the use of force to intervene in both countries. On one hand, China “silently” approved the resolution on Libya by an
abstention. On the other hand, it cast three vetoes over intervention in Syria in the Security Council. In both instances, domestic demand cannot explain China’s voting position in the Security Council. China had few if any material interests in Syria. And if it prioritises domestic demand or its material interests in Libya, China could vote negatively towards Libya resolution.

The normative expectation of “responsibility to protect” (“R2P”) from the international society greatly influenced China’s Libyan vote. The major Western countries, serving as norm leaders, delivered significant amounts of normative persuasion and exerted great social pressure on China in the UN Security Council. Facing the growing reference group of “R2P,” China did not want to “rock the boat” and be isolated in the international community. After its abstention vote, which enabled Western states to legally intervene in the civil war, however, China did not receive social benefits of “back-patting” from either Western powers or Libya. As such the abstention was considered a “diplomatic failure” by Chinese government. Given this perceived failure, China joined with Russia and vetoed the subsequent Syrian resolutions which have allowed for humanitarian intervention. The result of these Syrian vetoes has led the international community to socially ostracize both China and Russia and led to severe social disapprobation, such as opprobrium and status denial; and yet China did not change to a more cooperative attitude in any of the three votes.

This Libyan-Syrian case-study collaborates the socialisation literature and reveals that China is sensitive to persuasion and social influence. Furthermore, in response to the responsibility expected by the international society China has shown two tendencies towards the normative incentives. First, the Libyan abstention vote indicates that China is more likely to perform its responsibility under the effect of social pressure rather than normative persuasion. Without truly internalising the norm of “responsibility to protect,” China chose a compromising yet “pro-group” behaviour. Second, with the increasing diplomatic confidence commensurate with its “great power” status in international society, China is more likely to cooperate in the pursuit of normative praise rather than out of the fear of social punishment. Therefore, a “heavy-handed” approach may not be an effective way to socialise a rising China.
Environmental Regimes

The network analysis of major international environmental treaties has depicted a China moving from the periphery to the central position in the international environmental community. Along with this status change, China has been able to access more social power and resources within the network. Located in the centre of the group, France, Japan and Britain are more likely to serve the role of “norm entrepreneurs.” On the same footing in the network, India and Brazil are China’s “peers” facing similar social pressure.

The biological diversity normative community has achieved a long-term interaction with the Chinese government without substantial Chinese domestic awareness in either biodiversity or biosafety. Effectively employing social rewards, the norm leaders have successfully engaged China to fulfil its responsibility in the Convention of Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. India and Brazil’s active participation, creating “peer pressures,” has also been a social incentive for China to comply. This situation is different when analysing the material and normative environment and China’s approach toward climate change mitigation. In this situation, the diverse interests and relatively small sized normative group have weakened the influence of socialisation. As such, China selectively recognises its state responsibility in climate change. With growing capacity in this social network, China has promoted the norm of “common but differentiated responsibilities” in addressing climate change issues and gained much support from those Non-annex I Parties that are mostly developing countries.

The environmental regime case-study suggests two major characteristics of China’s involvement in environmental regimes. First, compared with its human rights policy, China has internalised more responsibility anticipated by the international community in global environmental governance. It has localised the international norms into domestic legal system and institution construction. This result of socialisation is consistent with the content analysis in Chapter Two, which suggests China’s interpretation of state responsibility is largely associated with its dedication to the international regimes since the mid-1990s. Second, resonating with discourse analysis in Chapter Two, China’s increasing confidence and ambition in foreign relations has enabled it to behave beyond a
“socialisee” and it now participates in the argumentation and socialisation process with its own agenda and preferred values. At the same time, the case study’s demonstration of China’s selective compliance with environmental norms also provides the empirical support explaining the ambiguity in China’s official discourse on state responsibility.

Implications for Chinese Foreign Policy

Examining China’s practice of responsibility in the social context, this study hopes to shed some light on how international socialisation influences China’s foreign policy making, and to what extent China accepts the internal normative expectations of acting as “responsible power” in international society. To these questions, this thesis provides two observations.

“Limited Socialisation”?  

The normative requirements from the international society matter to China. No longer being conceived as a “revolutionary state,” China has developed a more cooperative and integrative approach in its foreign relations. In general, China’s interpretation of responsibility has become closer to the international criteria, especially in its increasing commitment in international regimes. Nevertheless, previous studies have suggested that China has shown “limited involvement” in global governance in terms of personnel, financial and ideational contributions.\(^1\) They also indicate that the domestic salience of international norms may explain China’s selective participation in global governance.\(^2\) China’s statist view of sovereignty, constitutionalism and its own values in global governance has made some of the norms rooted in Western experience, such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law, difficult to pass through the domestic “filter” and achieve a “cultural match” in norm localisation. The difficulty China has resonating with the international norms derived from Western sources has led to China’s “limited socialisation” in international society.

As a relative “new-comer” in the international community, maximising its material

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power and interest is not China’s only foreign policy objective. China has been eager to identify with the major power reference group and establish its status as a “responsible power” in order to gain more normative support and avoid social criticism. Navigating itself within this desired social group, China has started to emulate norm leaders’ behaviour and internalise some international standards of state responsibility into its foreign and domestic practice. Of course, even with this increasing congruence between international expectations and China’s interpretation of its normative responsibility, whether or not China fully complies with its international responsibility is still largely dependent on the specific scenario and issue-area. 3 However, the inconsistencies, between China’s perception of its “responsibilities” and those enforced onto it, is very likely to cause normative contestation and lead to the additional academic debates concerning China’s role in norm development and degeneration.

“Rule Taker” or “Rule Maker”?

Norms can create and represent social hierarchies by deciding what is normal and desirable. 4 In practising global responsibility, China plays the role of both a “rule-taker” and “rule-maker.” In less than one decade, China has achieved a central position in the environmental network as discussed in Chapter Five. Nevertheless, the social network mapping of international environmental treaties is merely one example to illustrate China’s rising status in international society. China’s rising status is suggested by its increasing willingness to enunciate its own interpretation of the international community’s proffered norms. Socialisation is a “two-way path.” In all the case studies investigated above, China has maintained its own principles during socialisation processes and has attempted to influence the international society with its favoured norms. For example, in its human rights diplomacy, China continues to ascribe to its long-standing position of non-intervention, even as it has comprised in some instances under social influence. In global environmental governance, China has made great

3 For example, some studies suggest that China comply with international norms more in trade-related issues than environmental issues. See Katherine Combes, “Between Revisionism and Status Quo: China in International Regimes,” POLIS Journal, Vol. 6 (2011/2012).

progress to match the expectations of the normative community. Nevertheless, acting
beyond a passive norm recipient, China promotes the norm of “common but differentiated
responsibilities” in global environmental governance and opposes the securitisation of
climate change.

The existing international society has provided a stable yet dynamic environment to
cultivate norm contestation and evolution. The international discourse of “responsible
power” while encompassing a set of recognizable norms and obligations is often difficult
to apply or understand in specific circumstances and lacks an efficient mechanism to
enforce compliance. This enables actors to incrementally modify the concept and attach
their additional meanings to it.\(^5\) It is evident from this study that China never acts alone
when it tries to shape the definition of state responsibility. Cooperating with other BRICS
states and considering itself as representing the interests of developing countries, China
has been establishing its own normative group to support a norm evolution with “Chinese
characteristics.” Whether such a display of normative and diplomatic virtuosity can be
maintained over time awaits future developments.

In a news release immediately after Xi Jinping took office as China’s new president
on 15 November 2012, he articulated the notion of “Chinese dream” which was the
commitment to “China’s great rejuvenation.”\(^6\) China’s re-emergence in the international
stage as a great power has clearly become an essential component of the rejuvenation
dream. However, as Winston Churchill once said, “The price of greatness is
responsibility.”\(^7\) China’s international conduct is not, and cannot be merely built upon its
material interests; it must embody some concept of international responsibility.
Investigating China as a responsible power in a dynamic social context, this study

\(^5\) For the condition of norm degeneration, see Diana Panke and Ulrich Petersohn, “Why International Norms Disappear

\(^6\) “Xi Jinping: chengqian qihou jiwang kailai jixu chaozhe zhonghua minze weida fuxing mubiao fenyong qianjin” 习近平: 承前启后 既往开来 继续朝着中华民族伟大复兴目标奋勇前进 [Xi Jinping: a link between past and future, and between old tradition and future case; marching bravely towards the goal of the great rejuvenation of Chinese nation] Xinhua 新华网, news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2012-11/29/m_113852724.htm accessed on 1 January 2013.

examines various normative interactions between China and the international community. It suggests that on the one hand, China’s interpretation of responsibility is greatly shaped by the normative anticipation from the international society; on the other hand, China provides its own insights and interpretations associated with the idea of “responsible power” during the socialisation processes. Therefore, this study has cast some light on the working of both a world’s China and a China’s world.
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