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# From Norm-Taker to Institution-Creator: China's Growing Role in International Institutions

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# Abstract

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(Re-)emerging powers are taking a more active role at the global stage and are moving away from merely being 'norm-takers' toward becoming 'norm-shapers' and even 'institution-creators'. China in particular is becoming a more important influencer regarding international norms and institutions. This paper explains how China has been evolving from being a 'norm-taker' into an international 'norm-shaper' as well as an 'institution-creator' and the effect this development has been having on the traditionally 'normative power', the EU as well as its response. Thereby, arguing for the importance of bringing socialisation into IR theory and showing that the way socialisation has so far been applied in IR theory as well as in practice is outdated and needs a different approach that corresponds with the changes taking place within the world order. The paper will demonstrate through two case studies, the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Summit and the establishment of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), how China is no longer unilaterally being socialised into the existing global order by the existing, Western powers, but that is becoming an active 'socialiser' itself, shaping norms and institutions according to its views. Socialisation should thus no longer be viewed as a one-way process in which the existing powers socialise the 'rest', but as an increasingly two-way process in which (re-)emerging powers are playing an increasing role.

**Keywords:** (re-)emerging powers, socialisation, norm diffusion, China, EU, global governance, international cooperation.



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## 1 Introduction

We are moving away from a unipolar to a multipolar, or as Amitav Acharya calls it 'multiplex' world. This world is marked by 'complex forms of interdependence'. As Acharya points out, the new world order 'requires a genuinely reformed system of global governance and greater recognition by the West of the voices and aspirations of the Rest'.<sup>1</sup> Despite the increasing interest in the values, interests and growing role of (re-)emerging countries within the global order, more in-depth research into this topic, especially using new approaches such as viewing socialisation as a two-way process, is needed.

This paper focuses on the role of socialisation within International Relations (IR) and the importance of taking socialisation into account in studying the changes taking place within the global order. In most literature on socialisation within IR studies, the mechanism of socialisation is used for explaining compliance of (re-)emerging countries with existing norms and their integration into international institutions established by the existing powers. Instead, this paper builds on socialisation and norm diffusion in IR and the ascend of (re-)emerging powers as international 'norm-shapers' as proposed by Pu Xiaoyu in his 2012 article entitled *Socialisation as a Two-way Process: Emerging Powers and the Diffusion of International Norms*. According to Pu, socialisation in IR should be approached as a two-way process, in which the West is no longer traditionally socialising the 'rest' into the Western dominated global order unilaterally, but in which (re-)emerging countries are increasingly shaping international norms and institutions as well as existing powers, due to their growing position within the world order (Pu 2012, 3-4). Beyond turning into 'norm-shapers', (re-)emerging powers are also becoming serious 'institution-creators'.

Since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the economic power of (re-)emerging powers, China in particular, has been significantly growing, even more so since the 2008 global financial crisis. In relation to their growing economic weight, (re-)emerging powers have been becoming

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<sup>1</sup> All quotes are from Amitav Acharya. 'From the Unipolar Moment to a Multiplex World', *Yale Global Online*, 3 July 2014, DOI: <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/unipolar-moment-multiplex-world>. Accessed on 15 July 2016.

increasingly active players in international institutions and global governance, with China taking the lead. Aside from focusing solely on the shifts taking place in economic power, it is important to take into account the changes regarding normative power when assessing power shifts as well, if not more important.

To some extent, China still considers itself as a developing country and in some regards China has not responded to pressures from the international community to become a more responsible stakeholder in global governance. Nevertheless, in recent years China has become more active in international institutions, such as among others the UN, the World Bank and the ADB. An important driver for China to become more active within international institutions, is that it feels underrepresented and side-lined in the existing, Western dominated international institutions.<sup>2</sup> Since around 2008/2009 in particular, China's influence in international institutions has been growing and through the set-up of new institutions and international initiatives, such as the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Silk Road/One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative, China has been actively diffusing its views and subsequently shaping international norms and institutions. China is thus no longer being unilaterally socialised into the global order by the West, but it has become an active 'socialiser' itself, shaping international norms and institutions according to their own views and preferences.

Taking the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Summit and the AIIB as case studies, the paper will demonstrate how China has been developing from being a 'norm-taker' into an international 'norm-shaper' as well as an 'institution-creator', and the effect this development is having on

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<sup>2</sup> Lack of reform in existing international institutions according to changes in world order. China wants greater representation within institutions such as the IMF, ADB, and World Bank. Among others, China continues to have little influence within the World Bank and ADB. This has to do with its low voting share within these institutions. For many years, China pushed the World Bank to increase its voting share. It was only in 2010 that voting shares within the World Bank were shifted. China's voting share was increased from 2.77 to 4.42%. Within the ADB, China's voting share remains small as well (6.5% in 2015). Reuters, *China gains clout in World Bank vote shift*, 25 April 2010, DOI: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-worldbank-idUSTRE63O1RQ20100425>. Accessed on 10 April 2017. Furthermore, the presidents of the World Bank have always been either from the US or supported by the US. The president of the ADB has always been Japanese. ADB, *Past ADB Presidents*, DOI: <https://www.adb.org/about/management/past-presidents>. Accessed on 10 April 2017.

the European Union (EU) as well as its response. This paper focuses on the response of the EU to China's increasingly active role within international institutions; the EU being one of the main existing world powers, that in particular considers itself and projects itself onto the international scene as a 'normative power' and that has traditionally been aiming to get others to internalize their values and norms. However, as the case studies will show, despite not letting go of this approach, the EU has become more accommodating to the increasing role of (re-)emerging countries, China in particular, in shaping the international system and norms. The changing dynamic between existing and (re)emerging countries that will be shown through the case studies in this paper will show the importance to bring socialisation in IR more strongly and to approach socialisation in a way that suits the shift the global order is experiencing from being unipolar to multipolar.

The paper starts with a comprehensive elucidation of socialisation in IR as increasingly becoming a two-way process; in which the existing powers of the West are not unilaterally shaping the international order and international norms any longer (into which the less developed and developing countries were being socialised – 'norm-takers'), but in which (re-)emerging powers such as China and the other BRICS countries are increasingly shaping international institutions and norms, thereby becoming more active 'socialisers' – 'norm-shapers' themselves. The paper continues with an analysis of China's behaviour at the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Summit and the EU's response. The second case focuses on the establishment of the AIIB by China and the EU's response to it.

## 2 Socialisation in IR as a Two-Way Process

This paper draws on international socialisation within IR theory. Bringing socialisation into IR theory gives new insights into the behaviour of actors and the social interaction that takes place between them (Pu 2012; Johnston 2008). In particular, socialisation 'helps to uncover the mechanisms and processes of norm dynamics in international politics' (Pu 2012, 6), an important aspect of analysing the current changes taking place within the global order.



Within Constructivism, socialisation is generally conceptualized as a process of the diffusion and internalization of norms (Wendt 1999). In the classical sense socialisation is defined as ‘inducting actors into the norms and rules of a given community’ (Checkel 2005). The constructivist approach however focuses more on if and how ideas matter and put more emphasis on the normative transformation of norms, analysing the effects of socialisation through the logic of appropriateness (March 2005; Checkel 2005; Pu 2012). By taking normative change as progress in IR, socialisation is therefore generally approached as normatively bettering the actor that is being socialized (Pu 2012, 8). However, as both Pu Xiaoyu and Amitav Acharya point out, given the changes taking place in the world order with (re-)emerging powers, such as the BRICS countries, increasingly becoming important players within the international system, there is a clear need within IR theories to look at whose ideas matter and who is socialising whom (Acharya 2004; Pu 2012). Constructivism has only just started to focus on this. In particular, the relationship between (re-)emerging powers and international norms has been understudied.<sup>3</sup> More emphasis should be put on the increasing interaction between the existing, (re-)emerging powers and international norms and institutions. Especially within studies about EU-China relations the focus has often been analysing the conceptual gaps between them and the EU’s attempt, as a ‘normative’ power, to socialise China into its postmodern norms (Pan 2012; Shambaugh et al. 2008; Cameron 2009; Keukeleire and Pang 2015).

In most literature on socialisation within IR studies, the mechanism of socialisation is used for explaining compliance of (re-)emerging countries with existing norms and their integration into international institutions established by the existing powers. Johnston’s book *Social States* studied the social processes that might lie behind changing levels of cooperation, taking China’s behaviour in international institutions as a case, making a strong case for the need to bring socialisation arguments into IR theory. However, in the book takes

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<sup>3</sup> The main scholars that have worked on this so far have been the scholars discussed in this paper; Pu Xiaoyu, Amitav Acharya, Emil J. Kirchner, Thomas Christiansen and Han Dorussen, Andrew Hurrell, Alastair Iain Johnston, Pan Zhongqi and Anna Michalski, Stephan Mergenthaler.

a unilateral approach when it comes to socialisation, thus focusing on how China was socialised unilaterally into international institutions. The period studied in the book was from 1980 to 2000 though, when China was still in the process of internal development and not yet a 'socialiser' itself. Shaping international norms was not China's aim yet at the time (Pu 2012, 7). As this article will argue, China started to shift from solely being a 'norm-taker' toward being a 'norm-shaper' from 2008/2009 onward. Its role as an international 'norm-shaper' became particularly clear at the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Summit, the first case study in this paper.

A country can be considered as a 'norm-taker' when it accepts dominating international norms and integrates with existing, mainly Western institutions, without pushing its own views and preferences. Being a norm-taker is most often linked to the early stages of development of (re-)emerging powers. At this stage socialisation is thus viewed as unilateral, the West is socialising the (re-)emerging countries into the existing Western order (Pu 2012, 14). A country can be considered a 'norm-shaper' when it actively tries to shape norms and institutions as well as diffusing its values and views at the international level (Pu 2012, 17). Socialisation thus turns into a two-way process, in which the existing and (re-)emerging powers mutually shape international norms, institutions and each other (Pu 2012, 19). The process of moving from a norm-taker into a norm-shaper will be elaborated on in the following paragraphs.

Pu Xiaoyu's article *Socialisation as a Two-way Process: Emerging Powers and the Diffusion of International Norms* focuses on the change that has been taking place since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century regarding socialisation and norm diffusion with the increasing role of (re-)emerging powers at the global stage, making the argument that it is not only of value to bring socialisation into IR but even more important, he shows that the way socialisation has so far been used in IR is outdated (Pu 2012, 4). It is the author's view that despite other works on socialisation in IR, Pu Xiaoyu's approach toward the role of socialisation in IR, both conceptually and practically, is the most comprehensive and accurate work to date. Aside

from his strong argumentation for the importance of the need to give socialisation a bigger place within IR studies taking a new approach to the concept, through the development of the concepts of 'norm-takers' and 'norm-shapers', Pu has developed a clear-cut approach to study the changing global order and the changing dynamic between existing and (re-)emerging powers more practically. As such, the author builds on Pu's work in this paper.

Despite the developments both in IR studies and in practice, socialisation in general continues to be conceptualised as a one-way process, in which Western powers socialise non-Western countries and (re-)emerging powers into the global, normative order. 'Socialisation in international relations literature focuses on socialising non-Western powers as aliens or infants' (Pu 2012, 7). The problem with this approach, as Pu explains, is that it is incomplete and largely ignores the agency in international politics, while it plays a crucial role in shaping social and political change. The increasing role of (re-)emerging countries at the global stage and the changes taking place in the global order only further confirm this (Pu 2012, 7). Pu Xiaoyu proposes that socialisation in IR should be, similar to the way socialisation is treated in Social Theories, viewed as a two-way process, viewing it as a one-way process has become incompatible with the changes currently taking place within the global order.<sup>4</sup> Pu conceptualises socialisation in IR as: 'a two-way process of interaction between nation-states and the existing international society' (Pu 2012, 9). Interaction between the existing and (re-)emerging powers brings forth a two-sided process of socialisation in which both socialise each other as well as shaping international norms and institutions. Approaching socialisation in IR in this way is much better suited than the traditional one-way approach to it when assessing power shifts, especially since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Viewing socialisation as a one-way process is not so much wrong, but especially given the changes currently taking place in the global order, more so incomplete (Pu 2012, 14). When

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<sup>4</sup> The shift in power from a unipolar US hegemony to a multipolar world in which (re-)emerging powers are becoming increasingly powerful. Power at the global stage is thus becoming more diffused.

assessing the socialisation process between the existing and (re-)emerging powers, socialisation started out as a one-way process. 'Socialisation as a one-way process is pertinent to the early stage of the development of emerging powers' (Pu 2012, 14). As the main priority for developing countries is to be accepted in international society, they accept and integrate the existing international norms. They are thus solely 'norm-takers' at this stage. The liberal order also offers many opportunities for developing countries to grow, making them more willing to abide by the existing normative order (Pu 2012, 14). Lastly, at this point the still developing countries do not possess the strength to push their own agenda (Pu 2012, 14-16). However, when developing nations grow stronger economically and reach a certain stage of development, their independence and weight in the international society increases. As a result of their growing power, they start to feel more confident and start challenging the notion that the dominating, mainly Western ideas and culture are superior, by putting more emphasis on expressing their views on existing norms and institutions as well as voicing their local norms and values at the international stage. Despite, their dissatisfaction with certain existing norms and power arrangements within the international system and institutions, it does not mean they will reject all existing norms or institutions. Instead, (re-)emerging countries start to express their views through more active engagement in multilateral forums and international institutions, thereby subjecting the existing powers to their views and starting to influence international norms and institutions. They thus increasingly become 'norm-shapers'. Here we can start to speak of socialisation as a two-way process (Pu 2012, 16-20).

China has reached a stage of development in which it is moving away from solely being a 'norm-taker' toward an international 'norm-shaper' and even an 'institution-creator'. Applying the definition of the concept of socialisation as proposed by Pu, as it is much better suited to assess the current changes taking place within the global order, the following sections will illustrate China's changing behaviour toward international norms and institutions as well as the response of the EU, one of the main existing powers within the global order, to show how socialisation is increasingly becoming a two-way process, thereby

arguing socialisation needs to be approached as such when studying the relations between existing and (re-)emerging powers, both bilaterally as well as within multilateral settings.

### 3 Case Study I: The 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Summit

Since the mid-2000s, China has come to express its views through more active participation in international institutions. The case of the 2009 Climate Summit in Copenhagen can be considered as one of the first clear cases in which China's began putting more emphasis on expressing its own views and norms internationally, it visibly acted as a 'norm-shaper', and one of the first instances within global governance matters in which the effects of the changing global power structure became more clearly visible. While China's role within the international climate change negotiations grew at Copenhagen, that of the EU, as a traditional leader, experienced decline.

World leaders convened at the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in an attempt to strengthen states' commitments to mitigate global climate change. The 2009 Summit is generally viewed as a failure, in particular by the EU. Sweden even referred to the summit as a 'disaster'.<sup>5</sup> The accord that was finally reached between the emerging powers fell short of the binding commitments to mitigate climate change the EU had hoped for (Johnston 2013, 14). China considered the Summit and its outcome a success. Although China did not want to commit to the binding and 'unreasonable' commitments the EU proposed, it wanted to present itself as a responsible power. A successful outcome of the Summit, by producing an agreement, was thus important to them as well. China India, Brazil and South Africa (BASIC countries) came to an agreement with the US in the end, surpassing the EU's proposals for the content of a binding agreement. Thereby successfully concluding the Summit in China's eyes, an agreement was achieved (Bo et al. 2011, 13).

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<sup>5</sup> Copenhagen climate deal shows new world order may be led by U.S., China, The Washington Post, 20 December 2009, < <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/19/AR2009121900687.html>>.

The 2009 Summit was one of the first indications that ‘the twenty-first century marks not the ultimate triumph of the West, but the emergence of a global landscape that is headed toward a turning point rather than an end point’ (Kupchan 2012, 2). As Charles Kupchan correctly points out in his book entitled *No one’s world*, ‘the West is not only losing material primacy as new powers rise, but also its ideological dominance’ (Kupchan 2012, 2). At the 2009 Copenhagen Summit, the attitude of China stood out in particular and was largely viewed as being increasingly assertive. However, as Gloria Jean Gong in her 2011 article entitled *What China Wants: China’s Climate Change Priorities in a Post-Copenhagen World* and Alastair Iain Johnston in his 2013 article entitled *How New and Assertive Is China’s New Assertiveness?* point out, China’s behaviour at the 2009 Copenhagen Summit should not be viewed as (new) assertiveness. China’s stance regarding climate issues has not changed much since the 1990s.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, from 2006, when China published a national assessment report on the impact of climate change in China so far as well as future trends, China’s perception of climate change developed from solely being viewed as a development issue<sup>7</sup>, into also being viewed as a security concern (Bo et al. 2016, 105-106). In its 2008 White Paper *China’s Policies and Actions for Addressing Climate Change*, China for the first

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<sup>6</sup> China’s international negotiation position concerning climate change:

- Every country has common but differentiated responsibility in the issue of climate change;
- Every party of the convention should conduct comprehensive and effective cooperation on the basis of fairness while avoiding damaging every country’s sovereignty;
- An appropriate level of economic development should be the prerequisite for adopting concrete control measures to address climate change. Therefore, any measure of controlling emissions should take into account the per capita emission level of every country and guarantee the appropriate level of energy consumption in developing countries;
- Developed countries should provide necessary fund to developing countries and transfer technology with fair and favourable conditions.

Source: See Group 4, The National Climate Change Coordination Committee, *The Provisions Draft of <The International Convention of Climate Change> (China’s Proposals)*, in Secretary of State Council’s Environmental Protection Committee ed., Documents Collection of State Council’s Environmental Protection Committee(Vol.2), 1995, pp.263-279. Extracted from: Bo Yan and Chen Zhimin, ‘The EU and China in Global Climate Change Governance’, *Fudan University, Department of International Politics*, (January, 2009), pp. 1-21. See Kupchan, 2012: 2.

<sup>7</sup> The idea that climate change is the result of development and therefore should be solved alongside development.

time referred to the effects of climate change as a 'threat' instead of an 'impact' (Bo et al. 2016, 105-106).

China's position regarding climate change reflects China's primary concerns about sovereignty, economic development and the fair distribution of responsibility and reduction cost between developed and developing nations (Bo et al. 2009, 9). China's stance at Copenhagen was however misunderstood by the West, the EU in particular (Johnston 2013, 14). Despite the developments in China's perceptions on climate change since 2006, China continues to uphold much of its historic stance on climate change. China's general policy regarding climate change excludes agreeing to external oversight and externally binding emissions cuts (Gong 2011, 159). Chinese diplomacy at the Summit can be better typified as risk averse as China wanted to avoid any changes to its general policy and to make sure that the outcomes of the conference were consistent with its policy (Johnston 2013, 14). As such, China refused to agree to make credible mitigation commitments and agreeing to allow the international monitoring and verification of China's performance in that regard. In general, China's position and that of other (re-)emerging countries was not that different (Johnston 2013, 34). The EU's approach to get China and the US to commit to its proposed binding reduction commitments, brought the (re-)emerging countries and the US together as they discovered much of their views overlapped. It was these (re-)emerging powers<sup>8</sup> who ended up holding a closed-door meeting during the Summit to strengthen solidarity among the emerging powers and enhance their position. President Obama walked into this meeting straight after he had arrived in Denmark. As a result of this meeting, an agreement was reached between the BASIC countries and the US, which completely surpassed the EU (Kupchan 2012, 2). This was a serious blow to the EU's traditional leadership position within international climate change governance.

In the Kyoto Process, the EU played a leading role in the agenda-setting and the development of Kyoto Protocol. However, since 2008 the EU began to take a more passive stance towards

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<sup>8</sup> China, Brazil, India and South Africa.

the principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’<sup>9</sup> as well as the further continuation of the agreements set in the Kyoto Protocol. As a result, divergence between the EU and developing countries’ views on how to fight climate change deepened (Bo and Chen 2011, 99-101). Despite the ‘clash’ between the EU and China at Copenhagen, the EU and China have had a long history of cooperation on climate change. Cooperation on climate change particularly strengthened after the establishment of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. A good example of the strengthening of their cooperation on this front is their Partnership on Climate Change that was established during the 2005 EU-China Summit (Bo et al. 2009, 17). The EU’s purpose of this partnership, was to better understand China’s view on climate change as well as to socialise China to step up its efforts to fight climate change more strongly. At the 2010 EU-China Summit the EU and China agreed to further enhance cooperation, agreeing among others to enhance their cooperation on the development of technology as well as enhancing technology exchange (Bo et al. 2011, 8).

While bilateral cooperation between China and the EU had deepened, their respective negotiation positions at multilateral forums indicated a growing divergence. In 2007, China became the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gasses, leading the issue of emissions by developing nations to become the central point of discussion in international negotiations and to further divergence between the views of the developed and developing nations (Bo et al. 2011, 9). The 2009 Summit showed how large this divergence actually was. The Summit did not only reflect the divergence between the developed and developing nation’s views on how to tackle climate change, it also indicated the great amount of misunderstanding among the different parties about their respective positions. The EU started to overemphasize its own views and position from 2008 onward, overlooking more and more those of other, mainly developing nations. At Copenhagen, the EU was too eager and idealistic in reaching an agreement such as had happened in Tokyo in 1997. As a result, they overplayed their hand. By putting too much pressure on the developing countries, the EU lost support, leading

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<sup>9</sup> This remains one of the most, if not the most, important points of conflict between developed and developing nations regarding the governance of climate change.



the (re-)emerging countries and the US to pull out and develop an agreement based on their preferences (Bo and Chen 2011, 110). This was a development that the EU had not expected. At Copenhagen, it thus became clear that the EU had lost part of its leadership and negotiation power to (re-)emerging powers such as China. On the Chinese side, there was considerable misunderstanding regarding the other parties' positions as well. China had a poor understanding of how much other parties, the EU in particular, had moved forward on climate change (Johnston 2013, 34). China had not anticipated properly on a greater push for stronger commitments and was not at all prepared for the heavy criticism that followed after the Summit (Johnston 2013, 34).

### 3.1 The EU: Adapting into a New Role as a 'Bridge-Builder'/'Leadiator'

At first, the EU criticized the outcome of the Copenhagen summit, saying the final accord lacked ambition as it did not even result in a binding agreement (Bo et al. 2011, 14). However, with time the EU came to develop a gradually positive view of the Copenhagen Summit, as relayed in the European Commission's March 2010 strategic paper entitled *International climate policy post-Copenhagen: Acting now to reinvigorate global action on climate change*. The strategic paper reflects the EU's pragmatic shift regarding international climate change negotiations driven by clear strategies developed from the lessons learnt at Copenhagen. 'The objective will be to obtain a better understanding of the positions, concerns, and expectations of our partners on key issues; and to explain clearly what the EU requires of an agreement in terms of its ambition, comprehensiveness, and environmental integrity'.<sup>10</sup> After Copenhagen, the EU became less ambitious and more pragmatic toward international climate negotiations in order to achieve its objectives.

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<sup>10</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - International climate policy post-Copenhagen: Acting now to reinvigorate global action on climate change, European Commission, 9 March 2010, <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52010DC0086>> accessed on 23 July 2016.

The EU has clearly taken note of the increased influence of (re-)emerging powers and their new role as 'norm-shapers', as well as the US in voicing their views and position in climate change negotiations. As such, the EU has started to adapt itself and its expectations to the changing environment. The EU has therefore, started to consider converting its role into that of, what Bo and Chen have coined as, a 'bridge-builder' or Bäckstrand and Elgström's term 'leadiator' in their 2013 article *The EU's role in climate change negotiations: from leader to 'leadiator'*, since the EU clearly no longer is playing the leading role it was during the Kyoto Process (Bo and Chen 2011, 17/116). In its role as a 'bridge-builder'/'leadiator', the EU moved away from taking a leading role, to a mediating one. The EU has been mediating between the different powers involved; the existing powers<sup>11</sup>, developing countries (G77)<sup>12</sup> and the (re-)emerging powers (BRICS), who had become more vocal since Copenhagen (Oberthür 2011, 10-12). The EU also started working on coalition building with developing countries with whom it shared the same interests and ambitions in order to work toward its goal of achieving a new climate change agreement, which was eventually realized at the 2015 Paris Climate Change Summit (Oberthür and Groen 2016, 4-5). In short, 'This 'leadiator' role came about as the reinvention of EU leadership in the transition from a world in which the EU was a climate 'superpower' to a more multipolar world of international climate politics, as evidenced by the Copenhagen conference of 2009' (Oberthür and Groen 2016, 4-5).

The EU's pragmatic change of negotiation strategy had a positive effect on the EU-China partnership on Climate Change, which was renewed and saw the re-establishment of its cooperation and dialogue in the build-up towards the November 2010 Cancun Climate Change Conference. The renewed partnership brought forth a regular dialogue mechanism at the ministerial level. At the 2010 Cancun summit, the EU for the first time attempted to play its new role as a 'bridge-builder'/'leadiator'. However, at the conference, the EU still received criticism for its role and position. The EU was accused of taking advantage of the

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<sup>11</sup> Mainly the US, Canada, Australia and Japan.

<sup>12</sup> A loose coalition of developing nations, aimed at promoting its members' collective economic interests and to create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity within the UN.

undeveloped and developing countries and opinions were divided over the EU's capacity to carry out a leading role (Bo et al. 2011, 23-24). The EU's 2010 strategic paper did help in adjusting its approach and developing a more pragmatic strategy toward international climate change negotiations. At the 2011 Durban Climate Change Conference the EU had improved their strategy as a 'bridge-builder'/'leadiator'. 'The EU approached developing countries that shared its desire for a legally binding regime covering all major emitters and probed compromises with veto players, such as China and the US' (Bäckstrand and Elgström 2013, 1369). The EU combined their bridge-building strategy with a conditional promise to agree to an extension of the Kyoto Protocol (Bäckstrand and Elgström 2013, 1369). At the 2012 Doha Summit the details for the second period of the Kyoto Protocol were finalized, in large because of the lobbying by the EU. Despite the continuous struggles in negotiations between the developed, developing and (re-)emerging countries, through the set-up of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (to negotiate a new global legal framework covering all countries by 2015) at the Durban Summit in 2011 and the extension of the Kyoto Protocol at the Doha Summit in 2012, they managed to build toward a new agreement, which was reached in at the Paris Summit in 2015.

While the EU has continued to receive criticism for its role in international climate change negotiations, it has been adjusting its approach to the changing order regarding climate governance by becoming a 'bridge-builder'/'leadiator', and with quite some success, as their role at the 2012 Doha Summit and the extension of the Kyoto Protocol reflects as well as the outcome of the agreement in Paris in 2015 (Oberthür and Groen 2016, 4). Despite its success in adapting into this new role, the EU needs to continue to develop its strategy and approach. Especially, since the US and China who are much less in favour of hard, legally binding agreements than the EU have increased their engagement on climate change in recent years, noticeable through their signing of a climate deal in 2014 and their interaction at the Lima Summit a month later as well as at Paris in 2015. It is important that the EU continues to both engage with China and the US on climate change and strengthen its role as a 'bridge-builder'/'leadiator' within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and make sure

that the agreements made will be upheld and the potential to achieve future agreements will be increased.

### 3.2 EU-China Socialisation

China has learned much from the EU on fighting climate change. However, China's increasing awareness regarding climate change cannot solely be explained through the socialisation efforts by the EU. China has been working on climate change issues since the late 1980s/early 1990s (Bo and Chen 2009, 8-11). In 1994, China published the White Paper *China's Population and Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, in order to implement its commitments made at the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Summit. Protecting the atmosphere and fighting global warming were named as China's two main policy fields for sustainable development (Bo et al. 2016, 110).

Aside from the international pressure China receives, domestic factors also play an increasingly important role in China's behaviour toward climate change governance. In particular in recent years, China has become more engaged in climate change governance due to stronger awareness by and subsequently the demand from the Chinese public for the Chinese Government to step up its efforts in fighting climate change issues (Williams 2014, 16). As a result of rapid industrial development, using fossil fuels, mainly coal, China has been experiencing severe air and water pollution in recent years. Haze has become an increasing problem across China since 2012 (Bo et al. 2016, 107). Whereas the main priority of the Chinese Government traditionally has been, and still is, to generate and uphold economic growth, in order to preserve social stability and its overall legitimacy, the problem of air pollution has become so bad in recent years that it has been becoming a potential threat to social stability (Williams 2014, 16). As climate change problems are more visibly affecting the Chinese people, it has become an increasing public health concern, leading to a stronger bottom-up demand by the Chinese people to make more serious efforts to mitigate these problems.

As a rising power and an increasingly key global player, taking greater responsibility in global governance is demanded by the existing powers. China is aware of this and has been willing to take up this role, albeit on its own terms. As the case of the 2009 Copenhagen Summit has shown, this new and leading role, China has been engaging more actively in international discussions. However, China has also used the discussions about fighting climate change as a stage for voicing its own views and preferences towards fighting climate change instead of fully conforming to the norms set and/or preferred by the West. Since the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Summit, socialisation between the existing and (re-)emerging powers, has thus increasingly become a two-way process. This is also seen in EU-China engagement on climate change in the past decade. China is increasingly voicing its views on how to mitigate climate change, thereby shaping climate change governance, while the EU has moved away from its traditional approach of pushing its norms unilaterally onto China toward a more two-sided cooperative approach. EU-China relations post-Copenhagen and the renewed Climate Change Partnership are a proper indication that both parties are becoming aware of the changing situation in global order and the need to adapt and play into these changes if they want to not only come to more effective cooperation but also in order to maintain (in the case of the EU) and develop (in the case of China) a stronger position in the global order and its governance.

#### 4 Case Study II: The AIIB

Political changes to the world order started out rather gradually but were accelerated by the 2008 financial crisis. The West and their liberal economic order lost much legitimacy due to the financial crisis. Furthermore, the crisis created a window of opportunity for (re-)emerging powers to ascend to the global stage and share their views. Among others, the G20 was created and various new financial institutions were jointly set up by developed and developing countries, existing and (re-)emerging powers, to reform the international financial system and global economic governance. China's role in the reform of the

international financial system and global economic governance in the past decade has increased in particular.

For long, China has been feeling underrepresented and side-lined in the existing, Western dominated international institutions. China has not only been participating more actively in international institutions, it has also started setting up their own institutions. A new driver for China's more active diplomacy at the international stage comes from the economic challenges it has come to face in recent years, such as the slowing economic growth rate and declining exports and investments. These developments have made China's development model less effective.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, while China traditionally prefers to deal with others on a bilateral basis, through its experience within existing international institutions China has come to view its interactions within a multilateral setting in a more positive light (Miller 2017, 36). These factors, in combination with China's aim of becoming an international player in norm and institution building in accordance with the changing global order, has pushed China toward increasing its engagement in international, especially financial, institutions and initiatives (Szcudlik-Tatar 2015, 1-2). In China's view the current global order is in a state of significant change. The combination of the above described factors, created the perfect opportunity for China to ascend to the international stage and shape it according its own views, also referred to as 'great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics' (Szcudlik-Tatar 2015, 1-2). In particular since Xi Jinping's rise to power in 2012, China has taken a more active stance in this regard.

#### 4.1 A New Financial Institution

In March 2015, the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) was set up and entered into business in January 2016, with 57 founding member countries and 100 billion USD in

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<sup>13</sup> World Bank website, *China's GDP growth (annual %)*, DOI: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=CN>. Accessed on 30 March 2017.

committed capital.<sup>14</sup> As the Economist remarked in one of their recent articles on the AIIB's establishment, 'The AIIB has stoked controversy because Asia already has a multilateral lender, the Asian Development Bank (ADB). So why is China creating a new development bank for Asia?' (Economist 2014). 'First and foremost, the Bank will serve to boost regional infrastructure and economic development and hence support global economic recovery. It also represents an important move on the part of China to fulfil its growing international responsibilities, and to improve and complement the existing international economic system', said Lou Jiwei, China's Finance Minister in his speech at the AIIB's signing ceremony in June 2015.<sup>15</sup> According to the official website of the AIIB: 'The AIIB is a multilateral development bank (MDB) conceived for the 21st century.' 'The AIIB will complement and cooperate with the existing MDBs to jointly address the daunting infrastructure needs in Asia'.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, as China's former Vice Trade Minister, Long Yongtu, explained: 'AIIB is not the first multilateral financial institution...China itself benefits enormously from the contribution by the World Bank and the ADB. Now it's time for China to do something more for this region. And the difference between the AIIB and the World Bank and ADB is that this bank focuses exclusively on infrastructure development'. 'The AIIB is a bank, not a political organization or political alliance' and the 'AIIB is not China's bank'.<sup>17</sup> He there by aims to downplay the concerns and criticisms that China is mainly using the AIIB as an instrument to exercise power.

In recent years China, in cooperation with other nations, has been launching various new financial institutions and initiatives, among others the New Development Bank (NDB)/the

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<sup>14</sup> AIIB website, DOI: <http://www.aiibank.org/html/aboutus/AIIB/>. Accessed on 20 July 2016.

<sup>15</sup> China Daily, '*Inclusive AIIB can make a difference*', 25 June 2015, DOI: [http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2015-06/25/content\\_21096815.htm](http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2015-06/25/content_21096815.htm). Accessed on 27 July 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Both quotes are from the AIIB website, DOI: <http://www.aiibank.org/html/aboutus/AIIB/>. Accessed on 27 July 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Both quotes are from Xinhua, '*AIIB to be lean, clean and green, Chinese officials say*', 11 April 2015, DOI: [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-04/11/c\\_134142959.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-04/11/c_134142959.htm). Accessed on 27 July 2016.

BRICS Bank<sup>18</sup> and the Silk Road Development Fund.<sup>19</sup> One of the main reasons being its frustration about the little to no reform in existing financial institutions, such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).<sup>20</sup> Reform is viewed as necessary given the changing global order and global economic situation.<sup>21</sup> Take the ADB for example. Despite the fact that China is the biggest economic power in the region, Japan dominates the ADB. Their voting share is more than twice of that of China and the ADB has always had a Japanese president (Economist 2014). The creation of the AIIB can be seen as an indication of China's eagerness for change in global financial governance and boosting both its domestic and the international, mainly regional economy. As reform does not seem to be coming soon enough, China has started to take matters in their own hands by creating new financial institutions that will be governed according to their normative views and preferences.

Will the the AIIB truly different from the existing financial institutions? According to the Bank's website, 'the Bank's foundation is built on the lessons of experience of existing MDBs and the private sector. Its modus operandi will be lean, clean and green...The AIIB will put in place strong policies on governance, accountability, financial, procurement and environmental and social frameworks' (Economist 2014). The AIIB is in particular different from existing international banks in two aspects; the AIIB does not have a permanent board of directors and the Bank seems to have a flexible investment model, which aim to ensure the Bank will be a flexible, non-bureaucratic institution (Panda 2017: 12). However, there are also quite some similarities with existing international banks, mainly related to representation and influence, which made the US and Japan critical toward China's potential influence on the Bank's operations. The 5<sup>th</sup> Chief Negotiators' Meeting on the establishment

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<sup>18</sup> The NDB was established at the sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza in July 2014, when the leaders of the BRICS countries signed the Agreement for the establishment the NDB.

<sup>19</sup> The Silk Road Development Fund was established in Beijing in late 2014.

<sup>20</sup> E.g. Decision of US Congress in December 2014 not to pass reform within the IMF that would include giving more voting power to emerging powers.

<sup>21</sup> The Economist, 'The infrastructure gap. Development finance helps China win friends and influence American allies', 21 March 2015, DOI: <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21646740-development-finance-helps-china-win-friends-and-influence-american-allies-infrastructure-gap>. Accessed on 28 July 2016.



of the AIIB was held in Singapore from 20 to 22 May 2015 to discuss the Articles of Agreement (AOA), the charter of the AIIB. Which was signed by the end of June of that year. As Shi Yaobin, Vice Minister of Chinese Ministry of Finance and Permanent Chair of the Chief Negotiators' Meeting, explained: 'The planned authorized capital of AIIB is 100 billion dollars, which will be allocated upon data of GDP for Asian countries. As for countries outside the region, GDP is also an important criterion for allocation'. Allocation is thus based on GDP and capital, reflecting the practice of the IMF. China and India will be the largest shareholders of the AIIB.<sup>22</sup> Given the AIIB's voting structure, China will have the largest say. However, as opposed to the veto-power of the US in the IMF and the WB, China has said to give up its veto-power. This is considered to be a compromise from China to attract Western prospective members. Nevertheless, giving the voting structure China, being the largest shareholder, will have the 'upper hand', thereby effectively giving it veto-power.<sup>23</sup> After just a year of its establishment, it is too soon to tell how China will eventually act within the AIIB governance structure and if the AIIB, with its aim of being 'lean, clean and green', will indeed be much different from the existing, Bretton Woods institutions.

## 4.2 China: 'Institution Creator'

As Pu points out: 'a dilemma confronts the Western powers. On one hand, the West must cooperate with the emerging powers to address the common concerns of global issues such as climate change and the international financial crisis. The West, however, also worries about challenges from emerging powers to the existing liberal order' (Pu 2012, 26). China's creation of the AIIB and the different responses from Western powers, such as the US and various EU member states, are a good example of the West's dilemma Pu speaks of.

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<sup>22</sup> Xinhua, 'Agreement on AOA milestone for establishing of AIIB', 22 May 2015, DOI: [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-05/22/c\\_134262848.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-05/22/c_134262848.htm). Accessed on 30 July 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Wall Street Journal, 'How China Plans to Run AIIB: Leaner, With Veto', 8 June 2015, DOI: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/how-china-plans-to-run-aiib-leaner-with-veto-1433764079> Accessed on 30 July 2016.

The US and Japan, both not member of the Bank, have been critical of the AIIB's creation, arguing that the Bank will overlap and compete with existing financial institutions such as the ADB and the WB. It is argued that China will use the AIIB to expand its influence at the expense of the US and Japan (Economist 2014). Given the US' hegemonic status at both the international stage and within the existing financial institutions and its strong relations with other Western countries, it did not expect its Western allies to join the AIIB. As such, the announcement of the UK on 12 March 2015 that it would join the AIIB came as a shock, even to China. Other EU countries soon followed suit. As Jagannath P. Panda explains in his March 2017 article *AIIB Chronicle: China's Ambition Behind Infrastructure Investment*, China promoted the AIIB as a global bank, instead of an Asian bank, to gain the endorsement of the major European countries, who indeed joined the Bank (Panda 2017). Of the 57 founding members, 20 countries are non-Asian countries and 14 of the 57 them are EU countries. Although the US stressed to its allies joining the AIIB was off-limits (the US denies this) the decision by multiple US allies to join the AIIB could be viewed, as the Financial Times pointed out, as 'one of the most powerful symbols to date of the eastward shift of global power'.<sup>24</sup> In any case, 'the decision of these leading European countries to become members made AIIB secure the tag of being a truly global institution' (Panda 2017, 2).

Since the Bank launched in January 2016, it has approved thirteen projects related to either energy, transport or other sectors, such as the National Slum Upgrading Project in Indonesia, bringing the AIIB's total lending to over US\$2 billion.<sup>25</sup> The ADB, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), which has been a strong supporter of the AIIB since its inception, and the World Bank are co-financing partners on several of the loans, are an indicator that the AIIB is being taken seriously as a new international financial

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<sup>24</sup> Financial Times, 'UK move to join China-led bank a surprise even to Beijing', 26 March 2015, DOI: <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/d33fed8a-d3a1-11e4-a9d3-00144feab7de.html#axzz3cugREyKU>. Accessed on 30 July 2016.

<sup>25</sup> AIIB website, *Approved Projects*, April 2017, DOI: <https://www.aiib.org/en/projects/approved/index.html>. Accessed on 3 May 2017.

institution.<sup>26</sup> In March 2017, the Bank announced that it approved thirteen new applicants to join the AIIB, among which the EU countries: Belgium, Hungary and Ireland, making the AIIB increasingly an international bank instead of a Chinese bank.<sup>27</sup> To what extent China's power at the international stage could further increase through the establishment of the AIIB as well as its influence within the Bank is yet to be seen, but China's 'great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics' is clearly having an impact. While analysts were initially pessimistic about the AIIB's effectiveness, the decision of so many countries, particularly Western ones, to join the AIIB have given it significant credibility as a new, global financial institution. If this will truly be the case depends on how the bank will operate and what role China will play in it.

The case of the AIIB shows how China has started to not only shape international norms and institutions but also has also become a serious 'institution-creator' through setting up new international (financial) institutions. By deciding to become members of the AIIB, existing powers, in particular from Europe, are accommodating to the changing international institutional environment by accepting and cooperating with this new financial institution set up by China, as the number of European founding member countries and the recently signed cooperative project between the AIIB and the EBRD indicate. Although the EU member states seem to have taken an accommodating approach by joining the Bank, their membership will unlikely be of passive acceptance of China's views and preferences. Aiming to be a truly international Bank following international norms and standards, the AIIB offers the opportunity for the EU countries to actively share their norms and views/preferences regarding standards and representation. Within the AIIB socialisation will be a two-way

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<sup>26</sup> AIIB website, *AIIB's First Annual Meeting of its Board of Governors held in Beijing: Governors note progress during the Bank's first 6 months of operation*, 25 June, 2016, DOI: [http://euweb.aiib.org/html/2016/NEWS\\_0625/123.html](http://euweb.aiib.org/html/2016/NEWS_0625/123.html). Accessed on 30 July 2016.

<sup>27</sup> AIIB website, *AIIB Welcomes New Prospective Members. Bank approves 13 new applicants; Expands membership to 70*, 23 March 2017, DOI: [https://www.aiib.org/en/news-events/news/2017/20170323\\_001.html](https://www.aiib.org/en/news-events/news/2017/20170323_001.html). Accessed on 3 May 2017.

process in which existing and (re-)emerging powers will shape the banks norms and standards.

## 5 Conclusion

As one recent study put it well: 'China oscillates between the confirmation of existing global governance institutions, the support for reforms in global governance, and the will to create alternatives to existing fora in areas where it has not been successful enough to increase its influence'.<sup>28</sup> Since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, emerging powers, China in particular, have been becoming increasingly active players in international institutions and global governance. China is thus no longer being unilaterally socialised into the global order by the West. Instead, it has become an active 'socialiser' itself, shaping international norms and institutions according to their own views and preferences, thereby having become a serious 'norm-shaper'.

The cases in this paper have shown how China has turned from a 'norm-taker' into a 'norm-shaper' and 'institution-creator' and how the EU gradually has come to adjust as well as play into China's changing role in international norms and institutions in the past decade. While China has not been attempting to fully replace existing norms, it has moved away from solely being a 'norm-taker'; a country taking over/abiding by the existing, mainly Western norms into a 'norm-shaper'; a country more actively shaping existing norms and institutions according their views as well as introducing their preferred norms. Furthermore, China has gone for the strategy of setting up new institutions in order to be able to structure these according to their views and preferences.

Through the two case studies, this paper has not just attempted to show the increasingly changing dynamic between existing and a (re-)emerging powers, but more importantly that applying the mechanism of socialisation for explaining compliance of (re-)emerging

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<sup>28</sup> Directorate-General for external policies, *China's foreign policy and external relations*, July 2015, p 7.

countries with existing norms and their integration into international institutions established by the existing powers is incomplete and with the shift in global order becoming outdated as an approach. Through the rise in international institutions of (re-)emerging powers and the increased interaction between existing and rising powers, socialisation is increasingly becoming a two-way process and therefore should be applied as such within IR studies.

On a more practical level, despite socialisation increasingly becoming a two-way process, the EU and China will continue to have different views on global governance issues and they will continue to have issues of misunderstanding and disagreement, but they have both become increasingly aware of the need to bolster their ties in order to be able to jointly fight global issues effectively and to be able to maintain or strengthen their position in the changing global order. Both powers will need time to further adapt to the continuing changes in the political order and their role in it. However, significant steps have been made from both sides in recent years.

The EU has gradually come to adopt a more accommodating approach toward China in which it has not let go of its approach in its external relations as a 'normative power', but in which it has become more strategic about its engagement with China. The adjustments in their approach first became visible in the EU's pragmatic change of negotiation strategy regarding climate change with China after the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Summit and most recently in the renewal of its China strategy in June 2016, which focuses more strongly on 'engagement' and 'reciprocity'.

Peter Mandelson<sup>29</sup> already pointed out in 2008, 'if we (the EU) really want to shape the twenty-first century, we (the EU) have to shape it with, not against China' (Mandelson 2008). In order to be able to adapt and work with the changes taking place in the global system, both existing and (re-)emerging powers need to acknowledge this shift taking place and to

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<sup>29</sup> Former EU Trade Commissioner (2004-2008)

work on increasing their understanding of one another. Especially given the fast pace at which the new, multipolar world order is materializing and the important role (re-)emerging powers increasingly have in it, it is time to start taking the views and preferences of them, especially that of China, into more serious consideration, both in theory and practice.

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