

## **Beyond reach: China-UK relations and patterns of interaction on climate security**

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There is a contradiction between Chinese resistance to cooperation over climate change at the international level and the pilot carbon trading schemes being implemented by China’s National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC). This paper, based on research conducted through interviews within China, examines why China decided to adopt climate policies, including emissions trading, carbon capture and storage (CCS) and low carbon development, and considers UK patterns of interaction with China over these policies and how cooperation could be furthered in the future.

China does not securitize environmental issues. Instead, Chinese security is primarily defined as territorial security and social stability. However, there is recognition of a link between environmental degradation and social unrest, particularly air and environmental pollution, energy and water security and urbanisation. The new Chinese government has begun to turn its attention to addressing these issues, providing an opportunity for greater UK-China cooperation on climate security.

However, establishing cooperation on climate policy is particularly complex due to it cutting across the control and influence, or “turf”, of a number of different Chinese ministries and agencies. Furthermore, despite climate policy being led by the NDRC, bureaucratic bodies compete to enlarge their “turf” through the opening of new policies, the acquisition of “turf” from other bodies and “turf” competition. Using the concept of bureaucratic politics and the case study analysis of China’s pilot emissions trading scheme and CCS this research reveals that a foreign inspired policy would be more likely to be adopted if; it contributes to the national climate interests, enhances the essence of the dominant domestic bureaucratic agency and enlarges policy “turf”. In particular, Chinese ministries often look to foreign counterparts to obtain necessary data at the beginning of a climate project.

The UK and China already interact regarding climate change on technical and strategic levels on a variety of projects. However, there are many more opportunities for cooperation. By gaining a greater understanding of the bureaucratic dynamics, improving long-term institutional relations and providing best practise recommendations and model success cases, the UK could further cooperation with China on climate security in the future.

For issues related to China’s bureaucratic dynamics in relation to climate change, please see Olivia Gippner, “The 2 °C target: a European norm enters the international stage—following the process to adoption in China,” *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* (February 2014), available from <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10784-014-9246-5>.