



Toward Paris: China and climate change negotiations

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Abstract

This article explains the challenges and evolution of climate change governance by linking governance and diplomacy. The challenges of climate change involve not only international competition for new energy but also related adjustments of global governance in this area. To be specific, the carbon emission reductions are still problematic, and negotiations surrounding financing mechanisms between developed and developing countries hang in doubt. Furthermore, the attitude of the two sides toward CBDRs (common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities) and INDCs (intended nationally determined contributions) is disparate. Finally, this article outlines some diplomatic policies for China's future developmental trend.

Keywords: Climate change; Challenge; Diplomacy; Governance

1. Introduction

Climate change, a major and potentially devastating challenge, leads to environmental degradation, scarcity, and a radical reform of the energy mix among industrial countries, in addition to other non-traditional security concerns. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has claimed climate change is altering the geopolitical landscape, as is manifest in increased competition over Arctic resources, increased intra-state and interstate migration, and rising sea levels (FNS, 2009). From the 1992 Rio Summit to the Kyoto Conference, the Bali Roadmap and Durban Platform to the 2015 Paris

UNFCCC COP21, a generation has passed since the world's governments began to seriously consider the problems associated with climate change. It is now patently clear that the world must work to combat the climate disaster. However, there are two questions that we ought not to confuse: the first, why has global climate governance been so difficult (Annan, 2013), and the second, what factors hamper the effectiveness and fairness of international cooperation. This article provides an explanation of the challenges and evolution of climate change governance by linking governance and diplomacy.

2. Two logics for climate change games

In this analysis of the two logics of the international struggle against climate change, there are two focal points. The first concerns how to limit carbon emissions in different countries on the basis of global collective action theory (Olson, 1965). The second concerns the competitive advantage of nations resulting from energy know-how (Porter, 1990).

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2.1. Logic of collective action in international environmental cooperation

The future of the international struggle against global warming depends on collective action and shared responsibilities (Risse-Kappen, 1995). The international regime for averting climate change has sought to overcome this problem since the early 1990s. However, the international effort against global warming has produced mixed results. The explanations of both liberals and constructivists appear powerful in articulating an ideal condition or performance for collective action but somewhat insufficient in explaining the effectiveness of the collective action that has been undertaken. The effectiveness of collective action involves two overlapping ideas: first, which members of the regime abide by its norms and rules, and second, whether the regime achieves its objectives or fulfills certain purposes (Hasenclever et al., 1996). Apparently, the effectiveness of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol is very low. These divergences affect the effectiveness of the UNFCCC so much that they justify the need for a new theoretical analysis beyond constructivism and neoliberalism. Under Mancur Olson's collective action theory (Olson, 1965), three variables, selective inducement, optimal group structure or institution building, and major power, determine the effectiveness of collective action. Major power interactions determine the rules and legitimacy of collective action. Selective inducements shape the payoff structure of collective action. Institution building helps to maintain structure stability in collective action. Among these three variables, major power plays the most significant role. First, selective inducements depend on the preference structure and group scale. Second, the flexibility and payoff structure of the Kyoto Protocol affect the effectiveness of collective action against climate change. Third, when an established power abandons global collective action in some areas, some emerging powers will replace its role and push the collective action agenda forward.

Reducing carbon emissions is at the core of collective action against climate change and has impacts on the material and physical foundations needed for the survival of a state. Because no country is able to substantially influence the climate system on its own according to the principle of summation (Kaul et al., 1999), all states in the world should make efforts to limit carbon emissions. The key concern is the payoff structure for carbon emission reductions among different signatory countries. Homer-Dixon (1999) has argued that climate change problems may soon increase the level of conflict between poor and rich countries. Some Western scholars have termed developing countries' climate policy the maxi–mini principle, one based on the maximization of rights and minimization of responsibilities. According to this view, some developing states are only interested in free rides and in gaining access to technical expertise, foreign aid, and information to further their goal of economic development (Kim, 1992). Stone (1993) used the construct of free-rider behaviors among poor countries responding to climate change to suggest that there is strong evidence to support carbon emission limitations in poor countries.

2.2. International competition for new energy

Energy is fundamental to the prosperity and security of nations. Next-generation energy will determine not only the future of the international economic system but also the transition of power. On the basis of innovation, competition in the energy chain will determine the result of the power struggle and influence power transitions in the international system. The new energy is not only an important constituent of the next-generation energy system but will also change future configurations of international power. As Yergin (2006) of the American oil hegemony and Kennedy (1968) of the British coal hegemony indicated, the prerequisite for significant structural changes in the international system is an energy power revolution based on the emergence of next-generation energy-led countries. Technological innovation is of key importance in the energy power structure. Modelski's long-cycle theory (Modelski, 1987) confirmed the historical contribution of the technological revolution and institutional innovation to the rise and fall of great international powers. All have emphasized the effect of a great technological breakthrough on the world economic cycle, indicating that the cycle owes its rise to the technological breakthroughs in energy areas such as the electric steam engine and the internal combustion engine. Porter (1990) explained why nations should make an innovation-based model of comparative advantages a priority in developing their competitive advantage.

With the heated debate on collective action against climate change, Western countries have monopolized the future energy system on the basis of new and alternative energy. Evans (1979) once pointed out that every major power that dominated the international system had some know-how advantages. For now, it seems that a low-carbon economy and clean energy will ultimately determine the future of energy power transition. Golub (1998) recognized that the EU's environmental policy, geared toward boosting the bloc's competitiveness and promoting climate negotiations, might also boost its creativity and competitive advantage. In 2007, Stern (2006) confirmed that the EU promoted climate negotiations not only because it was a forerunner in a low-carbon economy but also wanted to achieve dominance in global governance and lay a firm foundation for the future economy. U.S. senior officers Paula Dobriansky, Richard Lee Armitage, and Joseph Nye once proposed that U.S. involvement in climate negotiations could enhance the nation's smart power and the competitiveness of its industry (FRC, 2010).

Western countries often take the fast-growing carbon emissions in new emerging economies to be a strong contender for explaining global warming. National competitive advantages are associated with carbon emission reductions. Those who advocate in favor of climate diplomacy think of environmental capacity as one important part of a state's comprehensive national power. Homer-Dixon (1999) supports the idea of limiting developing countries' environmental capacity and economic growth. Rosenau and Czempiel (1992) used the concept of a balance of payments instead of a balance of power in global environmental governance and

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