

Setting the Agenda

Chinese NGOs: Scope for Action on Climate Change

Idun Moe



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Abstract

The Chinese state and society are frequently engaged in an area of shared concern: the increasing threat of climate change. This report explores how a specific set of societal actors – environmental non-governmental organisations (ENGOS) in China – interact with state actors in dealing with issues of climate change mitigation. Drawing on two case studies of Chinese ENGOS, China Civil Climate Action Network (C-CAN) and China Youth Climate Action Network (CYCAN), this report sheds light on how societal corporatist mechanisms and state corporatist mechanisms are evident in the ENGOS' agendas. It asks to what extent Chinese ENGOS can set and pursue their own agendas, and to what extent it is the state or other factors that determines those agendas for them. Throughout the report examples of how state corporate mechanisms are still evident for social organisations' expansion, legitimacy and credibility in China are given. It further shows that the growth of societal corporate mechanism that target combating climate change is gaining a stronger foothold and withhold the ENGOS' political interaction possibilities, especially through the media, financial independence and international climate change negotiations. Furthermore, the report contributes to research on the autonomy for Chinese ENGOS and elucidates how they are balancing on the thin border between setting agendas that do not threaten the state's authority and agendas that can echo and gain credibility within a less climate change concerned Chinese society.

Key Words

China, environmental non-governmental organisations, climate change, state corporatism, societal corporatism, agenda setting

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List of Acronyms

CANGO:	China Association for Non-Governmental Organisations Cooperation
CAS:	China Academy of Science
C-CAN:	China Civil Climate Action Network
CCP:	Chinese Communist Party
CDM:	Clean Development Mechanism
CER:	Certified Emission Reduction
COP:	Conference of the Parties
CYCAN:	China Youth Climate Action Network
ENGO:	environmental non-governmental organisation
FYP:	Five-Year Plan
GHG:	greenhouse gases
GONGO:	government-organised non-governmental organisation
HEI:	Higher Education Campaign
I-CAN:	Climate Action Network International
IYSECC:	International Youth Summit on Energy and Climate Change
MEP:	Ministry of Environmental Protection (China)
MOCA:	Ministry of Civil Affairs (China)
MOFA:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (China)
MOST:	Ministry of Science and Technology (China)
NCSC:	National Strategic Research Institute for Chinese Cooperation on Climate Change
NDRC:	National Development and Reform Commission
NGO:	non-governmental organisation
NLGCC:	National Leading Group on Climate Change
PNEU:	private non-enterprise units
SAIC:	State Administration for Industry and Commerce Bureau
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC:	United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change

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Preface

This report is based on my Master's thesis in Chinese Society and Politics from the University of Oslo, autumn 2012. I would like to express my appreciation to my supervisors, Halvor Bøyesen Eifring, Professor in East Asian Studies, and Guri Bang, Associate Professor at the Centre for Development and Environment, for invaluable advice, engagement and support.

Second of all, I would like to thank my interviewees, who made a large part of this report possible. I am grateful to you for sharing your knowledge, time and expertise with me. I wish you all success in future climate change negotiations and hope you never stop pursuing your goals! Additionally I would like express my appreciation to hospitable friends during my fieldwork and while I was writing this.

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Any inaccuracies that might occur in this report are solely my own.

Oslo, July 2013

Idun Moe

1 Introduction

Under one-party rule, Chinese society is controlled largely by the state. The state is in numerous ways involved in defining the premises on which society develops and takes shape. That said, however, Chinese society has been establishing itself under very different circumstances since economic reforms were introduced in the 1980s. This has resulted in the growth of social organisations (Saich, 2006, p.1), and society is making deeper interest-representational footprints in interaction with the state than earlier.

The Chinese state and society find themselves engaged in one important area of mutual concern: the growing threat of climate change. China's world-leading emission rates¹ have made the country an international political hot spot. Domestic policies to mitigate climate change have become a matter of urgency. Social organisations today share the state's concern about the need to reduce emissions, having become more aware of and alarmed by the devastating impacts of climate change. Although environmental non-governmental organisations (ENGOS) focused on climate change mitigation² are relatively new and still few in China, reducing the threat of climate change has featured on their agendas as a matter of high priority since 2007 (Schröder, 2011). This report investigates how the interaction between ENGOS and the state unfolds in a field that holds such high political priority and is so important for both parties. My focus is on the following research question:

To what extent are Chinese ENGOS setting and pursuing their own agendas related to climate change mitigation, and to what extent do the Chinese state and other factors determine those agendas for them?

Through this research question, I explore the agendas that ENGOS³ develop based on what they see as the best strategy for fighting the threat of climate change in China. By 'agendas' are meant the ENGOS' areas of interests and how they incorporate these into their work strategies. This report also discusses other societal actors and the state's own approach to tackling the threat of climate change. Both state and society are pre-occupied with competitive concerns; however, their concerns do not enjoy equal political power.

¹ In 2006, China surpassed the USA as the world's biggest GHG emitter (*New York Times*, 2007).

² Mitigation refers to 'activities undertaken to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere' (Climate change Dictionary, 2010).

³ I have categorised as 'ENGOS' all the organisations dealt with in this report that conduct climate-change related work. Even though the focus is on work to mitigate climate change, it is important to include the environment more broadly, as the organisations I have studied include environmental protection in their work. Environmental protection issues are seen as partly separated from climate change mitigation issues since environmental protection also covers such issues of concern as biodiversity. In this report ENGOS are referred to as NGOs mainly concerned with climate change mitigation issues. This research excludes the international registered ENGOS based in China, focusing solely on domestically registered ENGOS.

It is vital and timely to analyse the role these new societal actors (NGOs) play in the development of climate change policies. China's actions aimed at mitigating climate change are usually discussed in light of the country's performance on the international arena – however, the significance of domestic conditions should not be neglected, but rather highlighted. With this report I hope to add a contribution to earlier studies of the NGO sector, the role of domestic climate change actions and policy development in China

This report analyses how state and society interact, and further touches on the vital connection between influence and restraint on the NGOs' agenda setting. To that end, I have chosen the theory of 'corporatism'⁴ as an approach. Corporatism can be briefly explained as a framework for understanding the tugs of war and negotiations between interest organisations and state agencies (Østerud, 2007, p. 79). This framework can help us to understand how societal actors relate to state actors in setting their agendas. It is precisely this relation between the two parties that I wish to explore: however, it is difficult to measure to what extent influence or discipline prevails between the two (Østerud, 2007, p. 78). As a result of the economic reforms, China's NGOs now have greater possibilities for political interaction possibilities, due to the expansion of societal corporatist mechanisms. This development affects the interaction between state and society as regards climate change mitigation, and the opportunities for NGOs to engage in independent agenda setting.

To approach such a vast and fragmented topic as state–society interaction, I conducted a case study focused on two Chinese NGOs specifically concerned with issues of climate change: China Youth Climate Change Action Network (CYCAN) and China Civil Climate Action Network (C-CAN). The case study will shed light on how these NGOs set their agendas, what activities are on their agendas and what state–society factors determine their role in domestic climate-change concerns. Empirical data on the two organisations and the Chinese NGO sector were collected through fieldwork in China, also involving interviews. The present report can cover only a few of China's many NGOs working with climate change, and represents but a small segment of the massive population of China. As I have wished to explore this field through the eyes of the NGOs themselves, the focus is on the NGOs' own perspectives.

NGOs in China have recently been given more leeway for interest-group political interaction. These possibilities for political interaction have arisen with the expansion of societal corporatist governance available to NGOs under state corporatist mechanisms. This development has appeared mostly as a result of the economic reforms, which have loosened the state's grip on society and allowed more civil-society organisations and other private actors to emerge. It has influenced the currents between state and society, and has resulted in more actors becoming involved in the climate-change negotiating process. Additional

⁴ The term 'corporatism' and 'corporativism' are used interchangeably throughout the political science literature. In this report, I use 'corporatism' when referring to this theory.

explanatory factors for the heightened political interaction between state and society include the greater capacity of China's climate change administration to incorporate ENGO interests, and political will on the part of the state to include the public in working towards the goals of national policies for emission reductions. It is difficult to assess whether the incorporation of ENGOS is due to the need for public participation to solve the climate change threat, or to their political significance. Despite the greater extent of societal corporatism, state corporatist mechanisms still constrain these ENGOS from fully engaging in various strategies aimed at mitigating climate change and from acting on agendas that can provide political power. Conditions in the ENGOS' organisational capacity weaken their courage and possibilities to enforce their own agendas, which in turn affects their possibilities for acting as credible agents in society and within the state.

Part one of this report presents background information: on methodology in chapter 2, on the theory framework in chapter 3, and on national climate change and NGO concerns and administrative agencies involved in determining the ENGOS' legal existence and goals in chapter 4. In part two, chapter 5 explores ENGO interaction with the state on climate change mitigation and legal issues, and presents my case-study findings on CYCAN and C-CAN. In the third part of this report, in chapter 6 I discuss and analyse my findings and discuss whether these ENGOS' agenda-setting power is determined under state corporatism and societal corporatism. I also discuss ENGO autonomy from and dependence on the state, as well as highlighting problematic factors involved in the ENGOS' determination and pursuit of their agendas, such as capacity and credibility. Finally, chapter 7 sums up the findings and offers some conclusions.

2 Theory Framework

In an authoritarian state such as China, the state is often deeply involved in societal matters, and ENGOs are no exception (Xie, 2009, p. 3). This makes it important to understand and categorise the relationship between ENGOs and the state. Using the theory of corporatism as an analytical framework, this report highlights key elements of how state and society interact when dealing with an issue of mutual concern: the threat of climate change. I begin by presenting corporatism, and then the differences between societal and state corporatism. I then introduce the expected findings based on the use of the corporatist theory, and note some advantages and disadvantages of using corporatism as a theory framework.

First of all, a few words on use of the term ‘the state’. Today’s Chinese state does not exist independently from persons or institutions, as the state institutions do not function independently from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Many scholars equate the state with the CCP, and this is where the term ‘party-state’ originates: a state in which the CCP, as the core of the state, enjoys a monopoly on state power (Zheng, 1997, pp. 6–12). In this report, I refer to ‘the state’ as defined by Zheng (1997). Further, the omnipresence of the CCP within state institutions applies to the Chinese government as well.⁵

2.1 Corporatism

Corporatism is a structure that comprises the various dimensions in the negotiation process evolving between the state and society in a country (Østerud, 2007, p. 79). Traditionally, corporatism meant a political system with functional representation, where the political organs were composed of selected representatives from organisations, associations, labour organisations and businesses. A state with such a political system would be a ‘corporative state’ (Østerud, 2007, p. 77). Corporatism is usually presented as a counterpart to democratic pluralism and free market forces. However, corporatist mechanisms cannot *explain* a political system: the term may be applied both to a polity under communist rule and in democracies. Its generalising character is an advantage as well as a disadvantage, a point to which we return in section 3.3. Although associated with fascist governments during the 1930s, ‘corporatism’ is now used to describe a range of political arrangements under governments exercising various forms of governance (Østerud, 2007, pp. 77–79). Phillippe C. Schmitter has defined corporatism as

a system of interest representation in which the constituent parts are organised into a limited number of singular, compulsory, non-competitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognised or licensed

⁵ The report will not elaborate on the structure of the Chinese government; however it should be noted that the State Council is considered as the government of the country and is its top administrative and executive organ (gov.cn, 2012). Most of my interviewees speak of the ‘government’ when referring to the authorities in China.

(if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and support. (Schmitter, 1979, p.13)

Briefly put, this theory is about correlating a country's society and dividing it into corporate groups, according to their common interests.

2.1.1 State Corporatism and Societal Corporatism

There are two subtypes of corporatism: *state corporatism* and *societal corporatism*.⁶ The difference lies in the relative strength and autonomy of social organisations in relation to the state.

Under state corporatism, the power of the state is predominant (Lu, 2009, p. 147). State corporatism is an authoritarian variant of corporatism. Policy-making is based on a 'top-down' governance model where the primary task of corporative institutions is to discipline their members, especially within the trade unions and labour organisations. In state corporatism, the aim of the state is to be a tight organisation with an emphasis on unity, discipline and cooperation (Østerud, 2007, p. 77), wherein corporate institutions are tools used to control various societal sectors. The government may take charge of creating and maintaining the corporatist organisations, granting itself the power to assign or remove leaders at will (Unger and Chan, 1995, p. 31). The state's relations to NGOs in such an authoritarian variant of governance revolve predominantly around the degree to which the state can use the organisations to achieve better policy results or as tools for implementing political decisions (Alpermann, 2010 p. 125). In addition, NGOs under such 'top-down' mechanisms are used primarily for gathering information on society (Salmenkari, quoted in Alpermann, 2010, p. 125).⁷

As to societal corporatism: in brief, the term refers to a governance mechanism based on a range of volunteer organisations that serve as stakeholders in public advice mechanisms and resolution bodies (Østerud, 2007, p. 77), as well as being a mechanism that recognises more 'bottom-up' demands (Unger and Chan, 1995, p. 40). Societal corporatism is a kind of compromise between capital and labour forces and between the state and the market which mandates the stakeholders to engage in mutual consultation with each other. It does not establish itself as part of an authoritarian decree, but develops through volunteer participation, driven by demands from the 'bottom' or invitations from the 'top'. Additionally, it has emerged through connections and associations across organisations (Østerud, 2007, p. 77).

⁶ Societal corporatism is also known as 'liberal corporatism' or 'pluralism'. In this report, I use 'societal corporatism' throughout.

⁷ This report examines only national state corporate organs in China that deal with climate change. There are climate change corporate organs at three other levels as well: the provincial, municipal and county (Xie, 2009 p. 11).

Scholars have noted a development in post-reform period China whereby societal corporate mechanisms play a bigger role (Unger and Chan, 1995; Saich, 2011).⁸ The economic reforms of the 1980s introduced a market economy, and as a result relaxed Party control over society (Unger and Chan, 1995, p. 38). This development differs from the situation in neighbouring South Korea and Japan: there, corporatist mechanisms were introduced to strengthen the state's grip on economic development, whereas for China they were a mechanism through which the state's grip could be loosened (Unger and Chan, 1995, p. 38). These tendencies toward more liberal societal mechanisms in China are further discussed throughout this report, as they are central to the ENGOS' agenda setting and their relation to the state.

However, drawing clear lines of division between the two variants of corporatism is very difficult. Determining if, or how, the ENGOS are a part of the state organs, or vice versa, can be tricky: 'Every corporative organ commutes between the influence of participation and discipline of the actors involved with great tension' (Østerud, 2007, p. 77). Because tension is difficult to measure, research conducted on state–society relations will necessarily involve some opaque information.

Harmony is a slogan for a corporatist system, regardless of whether the harmony is based on consensus (societal) or a top–down approach (state). Such harmony is very often goal-oriented towards serving a national mission. That is why corporatist solutions are often applied by wartime regimes that stress rapid economic development coupled with the aim of enforcing political and social stability (Unger and Chan, 1995, pp. 30–32). The concept of social stability and the building of a harmonious society (*hexie shehui*) is, in the case of China, a policy objective that determines much of the country's policy-making and implementation practice, domestically and abroad (Zheng and Tok, 2007). This political concern affects Chinese ENGOS in several ways, especially in relation to the importance of social stability, because the growth of interest groups may represent a threat to the state.

Drawing on corporatism as an analytical framework, I would expect to find that ENGO agenda setting in China today is less determined by 'top–down' governed mechanisms and more by 'bottom–up' mechanisms, providing greater possibilities for political interaction.

2.2 Variations and Limitations of Corporatism

Corporatism could be criticised as being too general a framework for analysing the state and the society. In view of China's party-state system and its impact on the formation of entities outside state control that might threaten the state's legitimacy or credibility, a generalised state–society relations theory seems inadequate. It is not only the complexity of the Chinese state apparatus that is ignored in corporatist theory, but also the complexity of the ENGOS themselves. Applying corporatism entails the

⁸ Unger and Chan (1995) have termed this development in China the 'East Asian corporatist model'.

challenge of having to treat social organisations as a homogeneous group in order to analyse them (Fan, M., 2010).

There are in China a great many ENGOs, and thereby considerable diversity in relationships with the state. Organisations are found along a 'continuum stretching from a state-dominated extreme to a civil society extreme' (White, quoted in Lu, 2009, p. 12).⁹ This aspect must be borne in mind when exploring the differences and similarities between the two ENGOs studied here.

Referring to the definition of the term 'state', other theories that place more emphasis on the characteristics of the Chinese political system have been introduced in the analysis of state–society relations in China. Many alternative theories seek to explain China's state–society relation using other premises than corporatism, such as 'fragmented authoritarianism' (Lieberthal and Lampton, 1992), 'state-in-society' (Migdal, 2004), 'civil society' (Yang, 2003; Deng, 2011) or 'dependent autonomy' (Lu, 2009). Furthermore, corporatism cannot fully cover the complexity and fragmentation of both the state and society (Alpermann, 2010). It treats both entities as two separate units, which entails advantages and disadvantages for applying the theory as an analytic tool. Due to the disadvantages of excluding particularisation, other subdivisions or branches of corporatist theory have emerged, including the 'East Asian Model' (Unger and Chan, 1995) and 'Socialist Corporatism' (Pearson, 1997).

The advantages of using corporatism lie in its ideal model and easy applicability for analysing the complexity of state–society interactions. Treating the state and society as two different political units makes their interaction easier to observe and categorise. Schmitter also warns against a definition of corporatism that is so 'narrowly attached to a single political culture, regime type or macrosocietal configuration that it becomes, at best, uniquely descriptive rather than comparatively analytic' (Schmitter, 1979, p. 8), underscoring the advantage of generalisation that corporatist theory offers. I believe this is also an advantage for this report as regards analysis and comparison of the interaction between the Chinese state and ENGO agendas. However, we should bear in mind the above-mentioned weaknesses and benefits when using the corporatist approach.

⁹ On the various NGO–state relationships, Coston (1998) provides a model that defines eight possible types based on several dimensions: government's resistance or acceptance of institutional pluralism, the relative balance of power in the relationship, and the degree of formality and the level of government linkage.

3 Method

This chapter presents the process of data collection, starting from January 2012. In order to answer the research question I have used text analysis and fieldwork. My primary sources are the published materials from CYCAN and C-CAN, information accessible on the organisations' Internet home pages, as well as interviews conducted with members of these organisations. Most of the empirical material derives from a six-week period of fieldwork in China, March/April 2012. My secondary sources are research studies by international and Chinese scholars; furthermore I have consulted Chinese state documents and state departments Internet home pages for information. Unless otherwise stated, all translations of the non-English sources used in this report are mine.

3.1 Case Study and Fieldwork

Case study as a method seeks to explain circumstances on 'how' and 'why' some social phenomena work and is further a good approach to use when examining contemporary and ongoing events (Yin, 2009, pp. 4–7). Through a case study of Chinese domestic ENGOs I examined the 'hows' and 'whys' of ENGOs' work on climate change mitigation and gained insight into their views on their own agendas, the state and society. The report examines *how* the ENGOs and the state approach climate change mitigation in China, as well as how the Chinese state approaches NGO actions. There has been little research on ENGOs specifically concerned with climate change, which led me to choose to use fieldwork as a means for learning more about them. Moreover, fieldwork, as a qualitative method, emphasises the importance of the actor's point of view (Repstad, 2007, p. 19). Fieldwork as a method has also been central because of the limited primary sources on the ENGOs studied here. In addition to providing interviewees and material from the organisations, fieldwork enabled me to attend two relevant seminars on issues of climate change, one held by the ENGOs themselves and another held by the UNDP. As CYCAN webpage (Cycan, 2012a) was undergoing maintenance and was thus inaccessible during the initial phase of my work, interviews with the members of the organisation and the material available from their offices in China, such as printed reports and policy papers published within China, proved invaluable. This has also been the case for my primary sources on C-CAN. Due to lack of funding, their home page (C-can, 2012c) has not been kept updated; that made the information and written literature obtained during interviews and office visits vital sources.

Qualitative interviews were a natural choice for obtaining more in-depth knowledge of the ENGOs' own viewpoints. I conducted semi-structured interviews with five ENGO officials from six different ENGOs, together with a set of five informal interviews with persons involved in various aspects of the Chinese NGO sector. I formally interviewed two members from CYCAN and two members from C-CAN in their offices. The interviews were conducted in English and Chinese. All formal interviews were recorded, as agreed with the interviewees. Formal interviewees were selected according to their positions in their organisations. Before arriving in China, I contacted them by e-mail, requesting an interview.

The other interviews, one formal and four informal, are the result of 'snowballing'. Since I wanted to access information on agenda setting, I chose to conduct formal interviews with people in high and administrative positions, as they are involved in the organisations' strategic and formal work. To what extent the different organisations were interested in granting an interview varied significantly. I have used material from all the interviews in this report. I will explicitly state CYCAN or C-CAN when writing about information on the two organisations. For information concerning all the other ENGOs I spoke to or ENGOs in general I will simply use the term 'ENGOs'.

3.2 Ethical Considerations and Source Credibility

China's political system and the restraints on the activities of social organisations entail the risk of ethical issues concerning sensitive state matters (Heimer and Thøgersen, 2006). In order to protect my sources, information acquired during the interviews is not attributed to any individual. Formal interviews are referred to as 'interview 1', 'interview 2' and so forth. Similarly, informal interviews are referred to as 'informal interview 1', 'informal interview 2', etc. As this report aims at presenting research on a small segment of the societal actors within the arena of Chinese domestic climate change, I have excluded interviews with other state actors concerned with these issues. My specific study of CYCAN and C-CAN should yield specific in-depth research that can contribute to a more generalised insight into Chinese ENGOs concerned with climate change (on this methodological point, see also Yin, 2009).

The process of collecting data inevitably gives rise to the question of the credibility of the sources. The use of both the ENGOs home pages and the interviews as sources led me to assess their credibility and reflect on the context in which the material was collected (Thaagard, 2009, p. 179). As noted, Chinese ENGOs do not have many publications issued outside of China nor are their webpages kept updated: these were main reasons for choosing fieldwork as a method. Using Internet as a reliable source in China is not unproblematic, due to the specific conditions imposed (Yang, 2003, p. 455). The caveats concerning Internet censorship must be taken into account in connection with information found there. My other source, information acquired during interviews, is a double-edged sword (Schostak, 2006). It was impossible to be certain that my interviewees gave 'perfect information' that can be applied to this research. 'With every view directed by a subject towards another there is an inter-view, a space between views' (Schostak, 2006, p. 22). In addition to personal perceptions and capacities regarding a research topic, interviewees may forget to mention some points, or the researcher can ask the wrong questions. And sensitivity issues or other hindrances might have constrained my interviewee's space (Yin, 2009; *Schostak, 2006).

Numerous conflicting issues encountered in the course of my research have required decision-making based on space limitations, scope conditions and necessary generalisations of concepts. My goal in including fieldwork in this report has been to obtain information not available outside of China. Throughout the case study, the main task has been to produce analytical generalisations, not particularisation. Some

nuances encountered during the fieldwork and interviews might have been lost due to language issues, which possibly affect the credibility of this research. However, I have kept all recordings from the interviews so they can be verified if necessary.¹⁰

¹⁰ On these and other aspects of methodology, see Yin, 2009

4 State Concerns

This chapter outlines the overarching national climate change concerns held by the Chinese state today, enquiring into the reasons behind the heightened attention to climate change in recent years. I present the various state actors in China's climate change administration, their positions and responsibilities in domestic policy-making on climate change,¹¹ and explain how the state administers the NGO sector in China.

4.1 Climate Change Concerns

For China, as for many other developing countries, the threat of climate change is a sensitive matter. In the case of China, its sensitivity is embedded in an interlinked three-dimensional dilemma: promoting economic development, the need for energy, and reducing the threat of climate-change consequences (Heggelund, Andresen and Buan, 2010, pp. 231–237). This dilemma acts as the backdrop that determines and sets the framework for China's policies and actions for addressing climate change (*ibid.*, p. 230). In 2008, the Chinese government officially recognised human activity as one of the reasons for GHG production (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2008). With the various impacts that climate change has already had on China, the central government has admitted that the country's development path has not been a sustainable one, and must be re-directed (Gørild Heggelund, quoted in Moe, 2011, p. 9). China has therefore started to move its development towards building a low-carbon economy¹² (NHDR, 2009/10).

4.1.1 National Targets and Climate Change Administration

First of all, China's climate change policies, its energy policy in particular, are closely linked to the country's economic policy and development. The main priority has been economic growth (Heggelund, Andresen and Buan, 2010, p. 231). China's development has led to large-scale improvements in living conditions and standards of living for the population – but it has also entailed enormous pressures on access to resources, environmental degradation and harmful air quality (Economy, 2003). Secondly, with economic growth come energy demands. Considerations of energy security and expanded energy consumption are involved in a critical tug of war for the country's future economic development, again linked to the economic obstacles that might arise in securing sufficient energy for the population without increasing CO₂ emissions. Thirdly, indications of heightened vulnerability due to the threat of climate change and its consequences for the population have

¹¹ By policy-making I mean: 'a broad statement that reflects future goals and aspirations and provides guidelines for carrying out those goals' (Osman 2002, p. 5).

¹² A low-carbon economy is defined as '...one that maximizes carbon productivity, improves capacities for adaptation to climate change, minimizes the negative impacts of climate change, improves human development, and accommodates both inter- and intra-generational needs, thereby laying a foundation for sustainable socioeconomic development. The ultimate objective of a low carbon economy must be to advance human and sustainable development' (NHDR, 2009/10, p. 5-The English translation).

resulted in a growing concern within the government (Heggelund, Andresen and Buan, 2010 pp. 231–237). Recent years have seen numerous reports of drought, floods and food security issues (CCTV, 2012). In 2011, droughts destroyed grain that would have fed 60 million Chinese for one year (Climate Change Info, 2012).

Some of the most recent and clear-cut evidence of the growing concern of the impacts of climate change can be found in the policy shift on climate change that took place between the 11th (2006–2010) and the 12th (2011–2015) Five Year Plans (FYP).¹³ This has been a shift from not mentioning the issue of climate change to including it in the country's national economic and societal plans (Moe, 2011). It involves not only political recognition of climate change as an issue requiring political action, but also a change in targets set for energy and carbon intensity (Seligsohn and Hsu, 2011).¹⁴ (See Tables 1 and 2.)

Initiative	Target	Outcome
Energy intensity	Reduce by 20%	Reduced by 19.1%
Non-fossil fuels	Increase share of non-fossil fuels by 3.1% per year	Increased by 8.3%

Table 1: Overview of 11th FYP targets

Initiative	Target
Energy intensity	Reduce by 16%
Carbon intensity	Reduce by 17% (40–45% by 2020)
Non-fossil fuels	Increase the share of non-fossil fuels by 3% so it accounts for 11.4% of China's total energy consumption.

Table 2: Overview of the 12th FYP targets

In the 11th FYP, the policy goal was to reduce the ratio of total energy consumption per unit of GDP by 20 per cent by 2010 compared to 2005 levels (Xinhua, 2006). In this period China came close to meeting its

¹³ The Five-Year Plans have served as central political guidance since the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Historically the FYP was adopted from the Russian model for economic planning in 1953. The Chinese FYP is issued every five years, based on the proposals from the CPC's Central Committee. The plan defines objectives, guiding principles and major tasks for national economic and social development during the next five years (Mack, 2011; Zhu, 2001).

¹⁴ Energy intensity is the energy use per unit of GDP (Seligsohn and Hsu, 2011). Carbon intensity is the ratio of carbon dioxide emission per unit of GDP (Seligsohn and Levin, 2011).

target, reducing energy intensity over the five-year period by 19.1%, and increasing non-fossil fuel use by 3.1% per year, so that non-fossil energy today comprises 8.3% of China's total energy use (Seligsohn, 2011, p.1). Even though emissions reductions were addressed in this FYP, they were not specifically linked to climate change mitigation, as they are today. Some key 12th FYP targets regarding the environment and clean energy are that non-fossil fuels are to account for 11.4% of primary energy consumption; energy consumption per unit of GDP is to be cut by 16%; and CO₂ emissions per unit of GDP are to be cut by 17% (Xinhua, 2011a; 2011c).

What makes the targets in the 12th FYP increasingly ambitious is that, having met last period's targets, the succeeding targets set for this FYP will be even harder to meet. Achieving rapid emission reduction becomes increasingly more difficult, the more you reduce. The initial reduction policies in the 11th FYP are referred to as the 'low-hanging fruit' policies that are easiest to implement (Seligsohn and Hsu, 2011). Banning coal plants and shutting down polluting factories are examples of such relatively easily implemented policies. Climate change policy analysts now believe that inclusion of the public is the next step necessary for achieving the 12th FYP targets (Zou Ji, 2012; Schröder, 2010, p. 6). Such public participation (*gong gong canyu*) is discussed in chapters 5 and 6 of this report, as it is of relevance to the ENGOs.

Awareness of the climate change issue, leading to a change within the climate change administration in the Chinese government, has been apparent (Heggelund, Andresen and Buan, 2010). Here I will briefly mention some trends in the climate change administration from 2007 and onwards.

The key institution in China's domestic climate change policy-making is the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC). It is responsible for organising and coordinating domestic decision-making and international negotiations (Central Government 2007a and 2008a, quoted in Wübbeke, 2010, p. 4). The NDRC has its own climate change department.

The highest decision-making body for China's climate change policy is the National Leading Group on Climate Change (NLGCC), which is, at the time of writing, headed by Prime Minister Wen Jiabao (National Development and Reform Commission, 2013). Its role is to coordinate policies, define climate change and low-carbon strategies across government agencies, and represent China's national position in the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations (Wübbeke, 2010, p. 3).

Institution	Leader	Description
NLGCC	Wen Jiabao	Highest decision-making body
NDRCs climate change department	Xie Zhenhua	Administrational role, domestic and international climate change issues
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Wang Yi ¹⁵	International climate change negotiations

Table 3: Key institutions in the climate change administration in China

Climate change is not only a domestic matter: it is also seen as an issue of foreign policy (Interviews, 2012). This is due to the political process of climate change as administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in addition to the NDRC. This foreign policy link to climate change is considered a crucial point for approaching emissions reductions beyond national targets. The scope of climate change has new, wider borders than before, which has resulted in an administrative turn as well as leading to a simultaneous expansion of sensitivity concerns. Being interwoven with the economic administrative unit, NDRC, and the administrative unit of the Foreign Ministry, MOFA, climate change has a whole new range of negotiating forces, quite different from when the issue was ‘perceived solely in scientific terms’ (Heggelund, Andresen and Buan, 2010, p. 237). While the NDRC holds the administrative role regarding climate change policies and economic policies, the country is now better equipped to work with, supervise and coordinate cross-sector challenges associated with climate change and further incorporate them into the national development agenda (Lok-Dessallien, 2010; Xinhua, 2011b, p. 12).¹⁶

¹⁵ Following the leadership transition in 2013 a new cabinet was approved by the parliament, with Wang Yi succeeding the previous Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yang Jiechi.

¹⁶ There are also some more proactive actors involved in the assessment of climate change, both state and non-state actors, like the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) and Chinese Academy of Science (CAS) (Heggelund, Andresen and Buan, 2010, p. 240). In recent years the scientific community has assumed an increasingly prominent role and has been included in various international research collaboration projects (Moe, 2011; Heggelund, 2009). Furthermore, state departments have established functional organs and working mechanisms to address climate change in their own work field. To coordinate this activity, a liaison office was established in 2010 within the framework of the NLGCC. Local governments have also established their own working organs in addition to a lead group to coordinate the work of climate change. Other supporting organs, universities and scientific institutions have opened various research organisations to assist the government (Xinhua, 2011b, p. 12). Most recently China has established a think tank, National Strategic Research and International Cooperation Center for Climate Change (NCSC), affiliated with the NDRC, to provide the NDRC with statistical analyses and reports. It is also intended to serve as an efficient channel in providing relevant information to the Party as well as for communication to foreign partners (Du, 2011).

4.2 NGO Administration

According to several scholars, NGOs occupy the space between the party-state on the one hand and society at large on the other – a situation made possible only by the retreat of the state (see Alpermann, 2010; Unger and Chan, 1995; Xie, 2009; Saich, 2006). NGOs are basically a product of the reform era, when the arena for social organisations expanded. Further, writes Saich (2006, p. 285), the state is unwilling or unable to carry out the same range of functions and services as before, and that is the reason for the establishment of many social organisations. This sub-chapter explains the significance of the state's registration system for Chinese NGOs, in order to provide a clearer picture of one of the 'top-down' mechanisms which dictates the existence of an NGO and which we can use as a backdrop in examining the extent to which CYCAN and C-CAN can or cannot set their agendas independently.

The concept and terminology of NGOs carry many meanings and definitions. According to one definition, NGOs are 'national and international nonprofit organisations as well as local membership organisations, often referred to as grassroots or community-based organisations, that represent the public interest (or the interests of groups of citizens) and are separate from the state and the market' (Biagini and Sagar, 2004). In this report I refer to NGOs as organisations formed by citizens in pursuit of common goals. I have chosen this definition because the NGOs themselves define their organisations in that way (Interviews, 2012). The definition of an NGO is important both to me as a researcher but also to the organisation itself. It is tempting to employ subjective perceptions of what an NGO is and what it 'should' advocate and achieve in order for it to justify itself as a non-governmental actor. Here, however, my aim is to see how the NGOs define themselves, to get an 'inside view' of their work. Such NGO activity can be referred to as 'bottom-up mechanisms by societal actors' (Alpermann, 2010, p.132).

4.2.1 Registration Procedures and State Organs

The Chinese state tolerated the emergence of vast numbers of NGOs in the 1980s. According to Alpermann (2010, p. 132), regulations concerning proper registration and administration of social organisations appeared after the student uprising in 1989. In China the term 'non-governmental organisation'¹⁷ is widely used. The official Chinese term suggests that the concept of an NGO is a 'popular organisation' (*minjian zuzhi*). According to Lu (2009, p. 3), popular organisations can be grouped into three categories:

1. 'social organisation' (*shehui tuanti* or *shetuan*)
2. private non-enterprise unit (*minban feiqiye danwei*)
3. foundation (*jijinhui*).

¹⁷ The direct translation for NGO in Chinese is *fei zhengfu zuzhi* or the English acronym itself, NGO (Alpermann 2010:147). During my interviews, the organisations themselves used the English acronym or the Chinese short form of *shehui tuanti*, which is *shetuan*.

Social organisations are officially defined as ‘non-profit organisations which are formed voluntarily by Chinese citizens in order to realise the shared objectives of their members and which carry out activities according to their charters’ (State Council 1998a quoted in Lu, 2009, p. 3). Private non-enterprise units (PNEUs) are defined as ‘non-profit social service organisations which are set up by enterprises, service units, social organisations, other social forces or individual citizens using non-state assets’ (State Council 1998b quoted in Lu 2009:3). Social organisations are membership organisations, but PNEUs are not. And thirdly, foundations are defined as ‘non-profit legal entities that employ assets donated by actual persons, legal entities or other organisations for the purpose of engaging in public benefit activities’. Like PNEUs, foundations are non-member organisations. Any social organisation or PNEU must be approved and registered at the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MOCA) at the county level or above, in order to exist lawfully. Foundations must be approved at the provincial or central government level. However, there are a few exceptions. The mass organisations (*qunzhong tuanti*) and people’s organisations (*renmin tuanti*) do not have to register. I will not go into detail regarding this kind of organisational category, but will simply mention that these organisations are basically agencies of the state. They were created by the state and often perform administrative functions on its behalf (Lu, 2009, p. 3). Lastly, there are government-organised non-governmental organisations (GONGOs), which are, as the name indicates, NGOs established by the government. GONGOs tend to be elitist associations with close ties to state agencies and consist mainly of scholars, policy-makers and government officials. These close ties can enable them to work quite efficiently (Heggelund, 2009, p. 162). Based on this description, GONGOs seem to be moving in the wake of state corporatist mechanisms. Additionally many GONGOs were established as a result of bureaucratic downsizing, when the state had to find new employment for former officials (Alpermann, 2010, p. 132). This report focuses on the situation of social organisations with an non-official NGO registration status, and discusses their relations to an officially registered NGO.

Current regulations require that every officially registered NGO must have a professional management unit (*yewu zhuguan danwei*) to act as its sponsoring agency. Only after obtaining a sponsor may an NGO apply for registration at MOCA. In addition the sponsor must be a state organ above the county level, or an organisation authorised by such an organ. It must also be relevant to the activities proposed by the NGO – the sponsor must have the same responsibilities in the same field in which the NGO operates (also called ‘the dual management system’) (Lu, 2009, p. 44). Nevertheless, state agencies are under no obligation to accept applications for sponsorships from NGOs in their field. Moreover, according to Lu (2009), current regulations do not allow NGOs with similar remits to co-exist in the same geographical area. For example, in Beijing regulations state that a maximum of one NGO serving the Beijing football club *Beijing Guoan*, can be officially registered. In practice, many NGOs have been unable to register, due either to the lack of a sponsor or to similarities to existing and registered organisations. In order to exist legally, some NGOs register as businesses with the State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC) and have received

preferential attention by international donor agencies (Lu, 2009, pp. 4–5). Lastly, there are many unregistered NGOs that conduct their activities openly and have been left alone by the government. They are believed to exist because of the government’s limited capacity to enforce the NGO regulations. Further, it is claimed that the existence of many organisations with diverse legal statuses has contributed to the government’s failure to put the sector in good order (Lu, 2009, pp. 4–5). Another reason for the disregard of unregistered organisations may be that they are seen as posing only a limited threat to the state or social stability.

	Organisational category	Registration permission unit	Chinese name
Official NGOs	Social organisation	MOCA	<i>Shenhui tuanti</i>
	Private non-enterprise unit	MOCA	<i>Minban feiqiye danwei</i>
	Foundation	MOCA	<i>Jijinhui</i>
	Mass organisation	Not required	<i>Qunzhong tuanti</i>
	Peoples organisation	Not required	<i>Renmin tuanti</i>
	GONGO	Not required	<i>Zhengfu zuzhi de fei zhengfu zuzhi</i>
Non-official NGOs	Business	SAIC	<i>Minban fei qiye danwei</i>
	Non-registered organisation or network	Non-registered	<i>Fei zhengfu zuzhi</i>

Table 4: Overview of organisational type, registration units and the Chinese name for the various organisational types

These registration procedures are complex, creating frustration among the ENGOs studied here. Most of the ENGOs I was in contact with during the fieldwork refer to themselves as social organisations (*shetuan*) because they identified with the State Council’s definition from 1998; however, they are not registered at MOCA and are not member-based (Interviews, 2012).

The legal framework and its procedures are relevant to this study because they have a strong influence on ENGO actions. The ENGOs in my case study have familiarised themselves with the system and subsequently chosen a registration status which allows them to operate outside of the

registration system, whether as a business or a non-registered organisation. These ENGOs operate as NGOs, without holding official recognition as an NGO. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage for them. The next chapter discusses this issue, as well as indicating how CYCAN and C-CAN have opted to deal with the question of their legal status, and the threat of climate change.

5 Societal Concerns

The previous chapter provided backdrop to the state's concern for climate change and presented the main state agencies that deal with the threat of climate change and interact with Chinese ENGOS. We saw how the 'top-down' governance mechanisms applied by the agencies involved with climate change and civil affairs are among the various factors that determine the leeway available to Chinese ENGO. The remainder of this report turns to the social actors – the ENGOS. What do their agendas look like, and how do they address issues of climate change mitigation?

Neither of the two ENGOS studied here uses terms like 'agenda setting' or 'agenda'. Interviewees and the material published by the organisations mention 'prospects/visions' (*yuanjing*), 'projects' (*xiangmu*), 'focus' (*zhongdian*) and 'goals' (*mubiao*) in connection with their own interests or actions related to climate change (C-CAN, 2011; CYCAN, 2009; CANGO, 2010). As noted in the introduction, by 'agenda' I am referring to an agreement on the organisations' interests where they emphasise working areas in connection with climate change problems. The term 'agenda' is in other contexts used to describe how NGOs, or other political actors for that matter, become insider policy-making participants by setting complementary agendas for other (state or organisational) actors, based on the NGO's effort (Murphy, 2007, pp. 2–3).

5.1 CYCAN and C-CAN Case Studies

CYCAN was chosen for the case study for several reasons. Firstly, it is the first domestic climate change youth organisation established in China; secondly, its agenda on climate change mitigation is directed towards public participation (*gongzhong canyu*) and raising awareness among the public (*gongzhong de renwei*) (CYCAN, 2009; Interview 3, 2012; Interview 4, 2012). Thirdly, CYCAN's work is mainly concerned with the coming generation, who are most likely to face the consequences of climate change first hand.

What led me to choose C-CAN was its status as a collaborative network for multiple climate change organisations in China and its emphasis on cooperation (*lianhe xingdong*) with numerous state agencies and other actors in assessing issues of climate change mitigation (C-can, 2012b). Moreover, it is a network that focuses primarily on strategies for mitigating climate change. Finally, as CYCAN is one of C-CAN's network organisations, this links the two closely together. At first I suspected that this might make them less interesting, as there might be less divergence, overlapping of work areas and promotion of identical positions and viewpoints. However, that assumption was proven wrong. And what appeared at first glance to be striking similarities between the two are in some aspects poles apart. The main difference relates to their concerns in addressing climate change issues, which are in turn reflected in their agendas. CYCAN's agenda targets awareness-raising, whereas C-CAN focuses more on advocacy work in connection with national climate change policy. I found that the two ENGOS differ in their registration status, aims, collaboration partners, donors, methods and motivations for

conducting their work on climate change in China. They choose different approaches and, consequently, develop different agendas.¹⁸

5.1.1 China Youth Climate Action Network (CYCAN)

*Our parents, their generation, are not aware of these issues...
so it is our generation who should take action.*

Fan Jie, Member of Beijing
University Clean Development
Mechanism Club,
in the *Economist*, 2010

CYCAN was established in 2007. It describes itself as a network consisting of seven different ENGOs¹⁹ (CYCAN, 2009, p. 3; Interview 3, 2012). It is registered as a business at SAIC and is sponsored mainly by private donors. As a registered enterprise, CYCAN must pay an income tax rate of 5% on all donations, and registration must be renewed each year (Interview 5, 2012). The organisation has around 30 unpaid members working both domestically and internationally and relies heavily on voluntary work. CYCAN is one of the 16 member organisations of C-CAN (CYCAN, 2009, p. 3; C-can, 2012a; Interview 3, 2012).

At the time of my interviews, the organisation had four main activities on its agenda (Interview 3, 2012).²⁰ In focus was the ‘Higher Education Institutions (HEI)’ campaign (*Zhongguo gaoxiao nenghao shuju diaoyan*), programme for research on the energy consumption of university campuses, evaluating their energy consumption efficiency, and scientifically supporting their energy conservation and emission reduction programmes. This campaign is known under the English slogan ‘Green Campus’ (CYCAN, 2009, pp. 9–16). In addition to lowering emissions, the aim was to establish a formalised administration to facilitate cooperation between institutes, NGOs and the contract mechanisms with partners involved in the campaign. The establishment of China Energy Consumption Standards for HEIs was the main target of this campaign, which was scheduled to end in August 2012 (CYCAN, 2009, pp. 10–15; Interview 3, 2012).

CYCAN’s second main activity at the time involved sending a delegation of youth members to the forthcoming COP meeting in Doha²¹ as observers in the negotiation process (Interview 3, 2012). The organi-

¹⁸ See Chapter 2 for details of the use of methodology of this case study.

¹⁹ The co-funding organisations in this network are UNEP-TUNZA-NEAYEN, Taking it Global-China, CDM Club of Beijing University, China Green Student Forum, the College Environmental Groups Forum in China, Solargeneration-Greenpeace, China’s Green Beat (CYCAN, 2009, p. 3). (See Appendix 2 for the Chinese names).

²⁰ Activities on CYCAN’s and C-CAN’s agendas are presented in both English and Chinese. Where there is no Chinese equivalent to an activity, no formal name is given on the organisations’ home pages or in their brochures.

²¹ This Conference of the Parties (COP) was the 18th high-level intergovernmental meeting held by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) where governments discuss, *inter alia*, the framework of the Kyoto Protocol. The 18th COP was held in Doha, Qatar (UNFCCC, 2011).

sation's third and most recent project is an exchange programme for interns between CYCAN and a US climate change organisation, with the emphasis on mutual learning and capacity building. This programme is sponsored by a foreign donor and was launched the summer of 2012. A fourth activity concerned preparations for the International Youth Summit on Energy and Climate Change (IYSECC)²² (*guoji qingnian nengyuan yu qihou bianhua fenghui*), which was held in the summer of 2012 (Interview 3, 2012). At the time of my interviews, CYCAN was about to start preparing for IYSECC and the COP delegation, so I could not get much information on this point. However, I know that CYCAN has participated at the IYSECC before (IYSECC, 2010, p. 21; IYSECC, 2012).

The organisation's declaration (CYCAN, 2009) underscores the wish to engage in a broad range of actions related to climate change issues, such as public education, research and campus-greening projects (CYCAN, 2009). They hoped, by the end of 2012, to have reduced GHG emissions on Chinese university campuses by 20%. Furthermore, CYCAN mentioned that all their actions put much emphasis on and are based on scientific principles. They also encourage public participation and cooperation with the government, corporations, local communities and other social organisations (CYCAN, 2009; Interview 3, 2012; Interview 4, 2012). The declaration emphasises various actions for climate change mitigation; however, CYCAN's main agenda item concerns raising awareness among Chinese youth regarding climate change issues and sustainable lifestyle choices. This point was underscored in interviews with the organisation as well.

When asked what CYCAN's most essential work is, one interviewee said, 'I think it is to educate Chinese youth in skills and competence so they can discuss climate change issues and engage in that field. I personally cherish this aspect much more than the actual solving of climate change issues' (Interview 3, 2012). Following up on this statement, I then asked why it is so important for Chinese youth to develop in this way. Interestingly, the reply was very similar to several other ENGOs' replies on the importance of development for ENGOs in China. Most of them said; 'Chinese do not yet have the "capacity" for dealing with this kind of topic, so they need to develop that before they do any other kind of development' (Interviews, 2012). This point was explained through the example of when CYCAN participated at COP 15 several years earlier.²³ The CYCAN interviewee saw how the international media listened to international NGOs when they announced their views to journalists. 'It was not like that for the Chinese NGOs. The Chinese NGOs did not get this kind of recognition from the Chinese media' (Interview 3, 2012). Here we see that the interviewee stressed that

²² It is a conference aimed at mobilising youth interested in climate change and climate-change related organisations to participate and share their ideas (IYSECC, 2010, pp. 1–3).

²³ At COP 15 in Denmark in 2009, China was basically blamed for the failure of the negotiations (Khor, 2009). This claimed 'failure' might also be a determining factor for the relative silence of Chinese ENGOs at the COP meeting. On ENGO attitudes and actions towards the climate change negotiations under COP 15 see Stensdal 2009, especially chapter 5.

Chinese NGOs are not equipped or trained to promote their case vis-à-vis the media. However, there might be other reasons why China's ENGOs failed to attract media attention. COP 15 was a critical negotiation process for China, and that might be part of the explanation.

CYCAN is active on the social networking arena. They have seven social networking accounts: *Weibo*, Facebook, QQ, *Renren*, *Douban*, Linked-In and *Youku*²⁴ (Cycan, 2012a). After months of maintenance, their home page was up and running again in April 2012. The new layout of this home page is more upgraded than the one they took offline in February; however, it does not offer an English translation of the page's content as the previous site did (Cycan, 2012a). CYCAN's online activity has been noticeably different after the new web page was launched. They post relevant material and update their social networking accounts frequently. It will be very interesting to follow this activity and revisit their progress in future research projects, since this extent of online activity is a relatively new move for CYCAN and has not been included in this analysis to any great extent.

To sum up, CYCAN defines itself as a non-profit organisation based on voluntary participation and registered as a business at SAIC. CYCAN focuses on raising awareness, training in organisational skills and promoting climate change issues to young people in China, especially university students. They also stress the importance of conducting qualitative research that can be useful to the state. They maintain a low profile as regards advocating national climate change policies and place limited importance on participating in the international negotiations on climate change. As a member of C-CAN, they are invited to meetings initiated by C-CAN with the NDRC and other climate change actors. CYCAN further describes its membership in C-CAN as a good way to communicate with other ENGOs and to spread its own agenda. Otherwise, however, their link to C-CAN was not further highlighted (Interview 3, 2012). When asked about registration status, CYCAN claimed that they did not want to be registered as an official ENGO, in order to avoid having limits imposed on their campaign activities (Interview 3, 2012).

5.1.2 China Civil Climate Action Network (C-CAN)

C-CAN is a non-registered network. It has 16 member organisations, with several other organisations in the process of applying for membership²⁵

²⁴*Weibo* holds the same meaning as the English term 'micro blog' and is the Chinese equivalent of Twitter. QQ is the Chinese equivalent of Microsoft Network (MSN), *Renren* is the Chinese equivalent of Facebook. *Douban* is a social network site for recommending books, literature, music and more made by the users themselves, and *Youku* is the Chinese equivalent of Youtube.

²⁵ After completing fieldwork, I was informed by e-mail from one of my interviewees that two more organisations joined as members of C-CAN. However as the time of this writing their names have not yet been released on C-CAN's homepage, so they are not included in the list of member organisations below (c-can, 2012b). As of April 2012, C-CAN's member organisations were: China Association for Non-Governmental Organisations Cooperation (CANGO), Xiamen Green Cross Association (XMGCA), Envirofriends Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, Friends of Nature,

(CCAN, 2011; c-can 2012b; Interview 1). The organisation wants to promote and facilitate information sharing and joint action (*lianhe lilian*) at various levels, in order to form a wider coalition of stakeholders to address climate change. C-CAN also communicates and cooperates with Climate Action Network International (I-CAN) as an independent Chinese network on the international arena. According to my interviewees at C-CAN, the only limitations on membership are on GONGOs and student groups. GONGOs are seen as too closely linked to the government, and the activities of student groups are not considered 'NGO actions' (Interview 1, 2012). C-CAN's member organisations are officially and non-officially registered NGOs, all based in China. In addition, there are some non-member observer organisations;²⁶ these may attend C-CAN's annual meetings and propose suggestions for the development of C-CAN (Interview 2, 2012).

C-CAN's main focus is to 'strengthen the knowledge base and capacity of NGOs to work on climate change science, policy and public involvement; to participate in international NGO discussion forums on climate change topics; to improve the understanding of policy processes and participation in decision-making; and to improve the capacity of NGOs for joint cooperation' (CCAN, 2011). According to its homepage, the organisation 'will continue to facilitate internal discussions among NGOs, external dialogue with the government and to campaign on climate legislation' (C-can, 2012b). The agenda and work are divided into two sections: the policy group and the campaign group. The policy group, established in 2011, is a platform for discussing and learning about national climate change policy (Interview 2, 2012). It focuses on communicating with member-NGOs, on serving as a mediator for the Chinese people, on providing policy recommendations to the state and on making national climate-change policies more transparent and effective (Interview 2, 2012).

The campaign group has four points on their agenda for the near future; here I present only three of them. The first one is the 'Green commuting fund' (*lüse chuxing*), which supports activities for low-carbon commuting in cooperation with China Association for Non-Governmental Organisations Cooperation (CANGO) (CCAN, 2011). Their second campaign is the 'Exchange Programme with European ENGOS', launched for participating ENGOS to learn about capacity building across borders. Thirdly, C-CAN has initiated the C+ initiative (*C+shidian*), an advocacy campaign to persuade people from various locations and industries to

Global Village of Beijing, Institute for Environment and Development (IED), Shanshui Conservation Centre, Greenriver Environment Protection Association of Sichuan, Friends of Green Environment Jiangsu, Green Anhui Environmental Development Centre, China Youth Climate Action Network (CYCAN), Shanghai Oasis Ecological Conservation Communication Centre (OASIS), Green Earth Volunteers, Promotion Association for Mountain-River-Lake Regional Sustainable Development (MRLSD) (CCAN, 2011).

²⁶ The observer organisations (*guanCha yuan*) are: Tsinghua University-CDM Research and Development Centre, Clean Air Initiative Asia Centre (CAI-Asia), OXFAM Hong Kong, WWF, Greenpeace, US Environment, Heinrich Böll Foundation, International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Asia Foundation, the Climate Group, the Nature Conservancy, and the Natural Resources and Defence Council (C-can 2012b; Interview 1, 2012).

adopt more ambitious emissions reduction targets than the legally-binding targets set by the government (Interview 1 and 2, 2012; C-can, 2012d). Beyond their webpage, C-CAN has a *Weibo* frequently updated; it had 5903 followers as of the time of writing (Weibo, 2012a). As with CYCAN, I do not have the space to elaborate on C-CAN's *Weibo* activity in this report, but their online activity would be interesting to follow in future research.²⁷

As to registration status: C-CAN is a project of the officially registered NGO known as CANGO (Interview 1, 2012). CANGO, founded in 1992, is a non-profit NGO, officially registered with MOCA in 1993. It operates nationwide and was rated as one of the top 500 NGOs in China in 2011 (C-can, 2012a; CANGO, 2010). CANGO focuses on promoting 'China's civil society development and providing a platform for the exchange of experiences and information for Chinese NGOs' (CANGO, 2010, prefix). The C-CAN secretariat has been based at CANGO headquarters since 2008, but is not registered in CANGO. As noted in chapter 4, the status of 'non-registered network' is not a formal category. Of interest here is the link that C-CAN, as a non-registered organisation, has to CANGO. This is seen as a crucial position due to the favourable relations that CANGO enjoys with state organs. Also of interest is the fact that an officially registered NGO is able to work openly with a non-registered NGO. All the funding C-CAN receives goes through the secretariat at CANGO before being forwarded to C-CAN. On the other hand, as a non-registered network, C-CAN can never act as partner in a project, so donations go through CANGO (Interview 1, 2012). C-CAN is funded mainly by private foreign sponsors. Most of CANGO's primary funding comes from the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP); however, according to interviewees at C-CAN, that funding is limited (Interview 1, 2012). From these findings, CANGO's collaboration with C-CAN is financially advantageous.

In March 2011 it was announced that the Chinese government would launch an open process for a new piece of climate change legislation – a national Climate Change Law. C-CAN's member-ENGOS prepared a submission through several workshops where they reviewed existing environmental legislation and defined unified demands regarding the new law. The ENGOS also met with the responsible official from the NDRC Climate Change Department, for updates from the government side concerning the climate change law (*qihou bianhua lifa jiaoliu hui*) (C-can, 2012e). The C-CAN policy group assembled their submission and forwarded it to the wider ENGO group for feedback. The final version was sent to the NDRC (Interview 2, 2012). The submission included guiding principles, preferred structure of the new legislation, proposals for mitigation and adaptation approaches, institutional settings, innovation, finance and public awareness: these had merged as points important to the ENGOS. Most of all, the submission highlighted the need for effectiveness, equity and transparency in China's mitigation policies

²⁷ C-CAN is also engaged in a climate change education programme (Interview 1, 2012); this could not be dealt with here, due to space constraints .

(Interview 2, 2012). It is not yet known whether this submission has been taken into consideration in the drafting of the legislation.

To sum up, C-CAN' plays a paramount role as the organiser and provider of a communication platform for national member-ENGOS, facilitating a 'joint society' in communication with the government. This platform gives each individual organisation a voice, and acts as a meeting point where information can be shared and spread. C-CAN's focuses on strengthening ENGO capacities and conducting policy advocacy, so that Chinese climate change policies can become more transparent. In addition, the close relation to CANGO also grants this non-registered NGO direct access for working together with state organs. As noted, the agendas the two organisations here express almost similar interests.

5.1.3 The Two ENGOS Compared

Both CYCAN and C-CAN are non-profit organisations primarily concerned with climate change. Neither is an officially registered NGO; C-CAN also holds the status as non-registered. Both organisations apply the term 'NGO' to their work, as they were formed voluntarily by Chinese citizens, in order to achieve shared objectives and carry out activities according to their programmes (Interview 1, 2, 3 and 5, 2012). Their agendas share the aim of contributing to climate change policies by conducting useful and professional research that can be of use to the government. In addition they both stress the importance of capacity building in order for them to stand firmer in interaction situations, with each other and the government. And both ENGOS emphasise exchange and learning from foreign ENGOS.

Improving their Internet activity and use of social media is also seen as important. However, they feel they lack staff capacity, since the process requires ongoing engagement, updating and frequent renewal to gain a credible foothold among their followers (Interviews, 2012). CYCAN is to a larger extent than C-CAN concerned with online activity. As CYCAN emphasises reaching out to the young Chinese, online activity has become a vital strategy.

CYCAN encourages public participation and runs climate change awareness-raising programmes. By contrast, C-CAN holds a more formal position, focusing on influencing policy and working together with the government. C-CAN is also important as an information provider and a focal point for the various organisations to communicate with each other. It is occupied with establishing governmental contact persons, facilitating meeting points and constructing a communicative platform for both the ENGOS and the government. From my interviews, this appeared to be more important than actual policy advocacy. CYCAN, on the other hand, is more concerned with equipping Chinese youth with tools to use in addressing the issue of climate change, and with getting young people involved in organisational work. In most ENGOS I talked with, the staff members were all relatively young; this holds true of C-CAN and CYCAN as well. Given the relative 'newness' of climate change work by Chinese ENGOS, it is hardly surprising that their members are young. My impression is that both organisations are made up of engaged young

people who want to make a change – by reducing the threat of climate change, by contributing to Chinese society, or both. C-CAN and CYCAN both stressed the Chinese government’s need for ENGO contributions in its work to achieve the climate-change targets set for the future (Interviews 1, 2, 3 and 5, 2012).

6 ENGOS' Agenda-setting Power

NGOs perform like a bridge connecting ordinary people and the government for that goal [sustainable development].

Xie Zhenhua, in *China Daily*, 2010.

This chapter examines the ENGOS' agenda-setting power, using the corporatist theory presented in chapter 3. I explore how the ENGOS are influenced by state corporate mechanisms or societal corporatist mechanisms. Further, I will discuss my assumption that the ENGOS have gained greater possibilities for political interaction because societal corporate mechanisms have come to play a bigger role today (Unger and Chan, 1995). Importantly, I draw on the ENGOS' own experiences and views on their interaction with both mechanisms, extracting what they see as the main challenges in setting an agenda.

We begin by seeing how the power of the state dominates the ENGOS, using state corporatism as an analytic approach. I discuss how the ENGOS' dependence on the state guides their agenda targets, and then analyse the ENGOS' agenda-setting power under the influence of societal corporate mechanisms. Here I have chosen three societal corporate mechanisms, or factors, that are involved in the negotiation process now evolving between the state and the ENGOS: the international climate change negotiations; the role of the media, online activity and online newspapers; and financial donors. We then turn to other factors that determine the ENGOS' agenda setting: these are mostly factors mentioned by the ENGOS themselves, regarding capacity and credibility in their own ranks, in Chinese society and in the state.

6.1 Agenda-setting Power under State Corporatism

According to Pearson (1994), 'Under state corporatism, the state deliberately restricts the number and multiplicity of associations, officially decree their legitimacy and protects their monopoly, centralizes the organizations and imposes controls on leadership selection interest articulation' (1994, p. 32). Is the state deliberately imposing controls on ENGOS and their agendas – and if so, how? We will explore how 'top-down' governance in the name of reducing climate change and maintaining social stability is in the interest of the state, and is therefore controlled by it.

As described in chapter 4, the state agencies involved with climate change policies and NGO policies are NDRC, MOFA, NLGCC, MOCA, SAIC and MEP. I discuss the authoritarian and disciplinary position of these agencies in relation to the ENGOS in the sections below.

6.1.1 *The Power of ENGOS' Climate Change Agendas*

Although the NLGCC is China's main forum for climate change concerns and is the highest-ranking agency for policy-making in this regard, in this section I focus more on the role of NDRC. NDRC is the agency for handling the daily affairs of climate change that has most contact with

Chinese ENGOs, especially since the latter part of 2011 (Schröder, 2011, p. 20). This increased interaction between the NDRC and the ENGOs is due to various reasons. One was discussed in chapter 4, where we saw that the climate change administration has gained expanded capacity to deal with the issue, but also with cross-sector matters concerning the state (Lok-Dessallien, 2010). Also as shown in the presentation of CYCAN and C-CAN in the previous chapter, another reason is that NDRC discusses ENGO agendas, as with the cooperation project on the proposed new climate change legislation.

Using the state corporatist approach, this heightened interaction with NDRC can be another method for the state to gain access to society in order to improve policies or function as a control mechanism over a societal sector (Østerud, 2007). The close link with NDRC is an indication of how the state may use its connection with ENGOs to ‘bridge the gap between the society and the state’ (Xie, 2010). This ‘bridging’ is a beneficial position for the state that can be used several ways. It can serve as a platform for the state where it can gather useful information about society as regards climate change mitigation efforts, campaigns, and problems, just to mention only a few. With help from the organisations, the state can access information about society otherwise not available. By gaining access through a collaborative platform where the ENGOs are represented (as CANGO does through C-CAN), the state can use the ENGOs as a means of achieving better results in climate change policy (Alpermann, 2010). By engaging the ‘opposition’– the ENGOs – the state can also maintain control on how it operates.

As seen from the case study, the agendas of C-CAN and CYCANs are not pushing for stricter domestic targets or policies than those already set. In this way, the ENGOs relieve the government of inside pressure and higher emission reduction demands. CYCAN’s HEI campaign aimed at reducing emissions at university campuses by 20% within 2012. This contributed to the 11th FYP, where a 20% reduction of energy intensity by 2012 was targeted (Xinhua, 2006). In the case of C-CAN, the C+ initiative is also a campaign closely linked to national emission reduction targets, but C-CAN’s focus is on getting emitters to agree to voluntary reductions even greater than what the state requires. By encountering the participants in the C+ and HEI campaign, C-CAN does not put any pressure on the state to set higher emission reduction targets. That ENGOs do not demand improvement of national policies might be explained by the fact that their agendas are already dominated by the state corporate mechanisms and are disciplined to following national goals. However, we cannot say whether the ENGOs’ deliberate intention is to support national set goals. In the next section, 6.3, I discuss how this can be seen as an advantageous approach for organisations seeking to gain access to both state and society. There is reason to believe that, operating in a political environment, as the NGO sector does in China, the ‘discipline’ as suggested by state corporatist analysis is somewhat challenged.

Another state agency heavily involved in the design of national policies on climate change is MOFA. It is closely linked to the international climate change negotiations in which China is involved. The concern for

climate change spans two crucial arenas, making it a politically sensitive area for the ENGOs and the state as well: the link from domestic demands to the international demands. Every demand for reducing emissions or improving national mitigation policies within China is also of relevance to the country's actions and targets on the international arena (Interview 1, 2012). If ENGO agendas emphasised implementing campaigns demanding higher emissions reduction, that would put greater pressure on the Chinese state to take on more responsibility on a global scale.²⁸ Here '...it is only logical that the corporatist state organs intrude and discipline the organisations frequently and is more on its guard towards their 'bottom-up' character displeasuring the state' (Lu, 2009, pp. 43–45).

When asked what differentiates ENGOs work on climate change from other types of ENGO work, several interviewees mentioned the international dimensions of climate change as a topic. One interviewee explained this difference by suggesting that environmental protection is a less sensitive topic in China than climate change, since environmental issues can readily be depicted as merely a local problem. The interviewee offered an example: If a factory is caught dumping wastewater in rivers the case can be 'explained away' or 'covered up' as matter of the individual owner or a business shirking responsibility or lacking morals. The problem thus becomes limited primarily to concern the local area where the actual dumping is taking place. However, if a factory with high emissions is shown to be contributing to increase the national emission rates of CO₂, that is not only a local problem: it also puts China in trouble on the international arena (Interview 1, 2012). Precisely because climate change holds a crucial position as both a domestic and an international issue, granting the ENGOs full autonomy (and thereby risking that ENGOs might demands more action from the state) could put unwanted international pressure on China. As seen through the example CYCAN gave me from their participation in COP 15, where they were not heard in the Chinese media, this aspect leads us closer to the assumption of state control over societal actors.

To sum up, the corporate mechanisms discussed here – NDRC and MOFA in addition to NLGCC – may influence the ENGOs' agenda setting primarily because they are China's climate change policy-makers and negotiators, and can be perceived as guiding policies for the organisations' own targets. When we analyse the relation between the state and the ENGOs through a state corporatist frame, these two agencies are seen as 'disciplining' the ENGOs to serve China's national mission – reducing the threat of climate change, in line with national

²⁸ China ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2002; however, as a developing country it does not have to take on legally binding targets like those of the developed nations in the international climate change negotiations (CNN World, 2002). China is a part of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), whereby industrialised countries that are obliged to reduce emissions can implement project activities that reduce emission in developing countries, in return for certified emission reduction (CER) credits (Richerzhagen and Scholz, 2007, p. 16). This mechanism has been established by the UNFCCC as a part of the Kyoto Protocol agreements. A CER credit is equivalent to one tonne of CO₂, and can be counted towards meeting Kyoto targets (UNFCCC, 2012a).

policy. With the ENGO agendas fulfilling the national target of 20% energy-intensity reduction and the avoidance of further international pressure on national policy, it seems reasonable to hold that the state is heavily involved in determining the ENGOs' climate change mitigation agendas.

6.1.2 The Power of the ENGOs' Growth and Expansion Agendas

MOCA and SAIC are the state organs described in this report that serve to restrain and/or encourage the growth and expansion of an ENGO. MOCA seems to be the state agency that is the most crucial for the ENGOs' official and formal status. It is the state organ that grants ENGOs official NGO registration; it is heavily involved in determining which category to assign an ENGO, which in turn determines that ENGO's dependence or autonomy from the state. Also SAIC determines the ENGOs' existence, by controlling the mechanisms where entities must register in order to exist legally as non-profit organisations. However, SAIC does not grant NGOs that register an official NGO status: it opens up for other climate change actors through the business registration procedures.

How the registration system restrains growth and expansion interests on the ENGOs' agendas can be seen in the restrictions on international leeway for ENGOs. An interviewee pointed out how the official NGO registration is fundamental if an NGO wishes to take part in meetings of the international climate change negotiations (UNFCCC). For an ENGO, such participation requires an official document provided by the state in the country where that NGO is registered. Since it is prohibited to have more than one official NGO doing climate change-related work, this official document is not available for the Chinese ENGOs I interviewed. However, there is another way: and that is registering Chinese participants from the non-official registered organisation as individual members in an international organisation that holds formal NGO status in another country. That means that neither CYCAN nor C-CAN can travel to the UNFCCC and be represented as an organisation: only as individual members within another officially registered NGO (Interview 5, 2012). The United Nations, as organiser of the UNFCCC conference, is obliged to enforce these rules concerning official registration permits, or else it would be working not only against Chinese law but also against the rules set by UNFCCC (UNFCCC, 2012b). This example makes clear the role MOCA holds for the ENGOs' engagement in issues of international climate change. One of the ENGOs interviewed was very upset about this 'lockout'; others, however, did not see it as especially problematic, since they were able to send individual members together with partner organisations instead.

MEP is the last state corporation involved with ENGOs to be dealt with in this report. I have included MEP because it is the acting professional management unit for CANGO, which in turn provides funding for its members, C-CAN and further CYCAN (Interview 1, 2012). Funding issues for ENGOs will be discussed under 6.2 below, as the case study in this report covers two non-officially registered ENGOs who get most of their funding from outside mechanisms of the state.

The restrictive methods on policy development and registration procedures presented above can be categorised as ‘attempts to create a state corporatist system of interest representation that helps co-opt societal actors into the organisational fold of the party state’ (Alpermann, 2010, p. 131). This is an essential point often stressed by authors who propose a state corporatist model to explain NGOs in China. Given Alpermann’s point, perhaps C-CAN’s strong link to CANGO can also be seen as a way for the state to gain access to all climate change-related ENGOs in China. By cooperating with C-CAN, CANGO also has access to C-CAN’s financial donors and member organisations. From this assumption, the question arises: might CANGO be serving as a government-organised non-governmental organisation – a GONGO? As explained by Heggelund (2004), GONGOs are state agencies that consist mainly of scholars, policy-makers and government officials, and are very closely linked to the state. However, it is not easy to say where the line goes between an officially registered NGO and a GONGO. It is even more difficult to evaluate this link since the question of who CANGO’s employees are has been excluded from this research. However, taking C-CAN’s existence on the premises of CANGO’s registration status gives reason to believe that C-CAN is one step closer to state corporate organs than is CYCAN. On the other hand, the fact that an unregistered organisation has close interaction with state organs may also indicate the importance of the ENGOs themselves.

6.2 Autonomous or Dependent Agendas?

Concerning agenda setting, it is highly relevant to discuss what Østerud describes as the difficult task regarding separation and tension between the two variants of corporatism, namely the shifting back and forth between influence and discipline of the actors (2007, p. 77). Even though the task is difficult, clarifying the ENGOs’ dependence/autonomy towards the state is vital for understanding the relation between the two entities. ‘Many scholars believe that Chinese NGOs lack autonomy’ (Lu, 2009, p. 29). This assumption is probably based on the rigid registration system for NGOs. As we saw, an ENGO cannot exist legally unless registered in MOCA, SAIC or, with C-CAN, through an officially registered NGO.

Autonomy can be defined as ‘self-governing’ or ‘independence’, but the term holds various meanings according to what discipline it belongs to (Merriam-Webster, 2012). It is implied that autonomy is equated with ‘self-governing possibilities’. The expectation that NGOs are more genuinely non-governmental and more autonomous and closer to the ‘grassroots’ is often implicitly incorporated in discussions of Chinese NGO activity, and has been a challenge in my research work. The autonomy of NGOs usually stands in relation to their political circumstances, and political circumstances in a party-state are quite different from in a democracy, where ‘bottom-up’ mechanisms are more likely to be welcomed and incorporated. Thus, in a party-state the path from linking autonomy as a necessity in order for an NGO to be a political influential organisation is not a long one.

When autonomy is limited, the ‘top-down’ mechanisms are more prevalent. However, that does not necessarily mean that lack of autonomy forces ENGOS to set agendas other than their own. We may ask: how do ENGOS under state corporatism shape a self-governing agenda, hence an autonomous agenda setting? Does the lack of autonomy mean that ENGO agendas and activities are more linked to government policies as regards climate change mitigation? This dependency when setting a climate change mitigation agenda that challenges the Chinese national agenda was indicated in the sub-chapter above. Both this report and previous research have noted that the agendas of climate change-concerned ENGOS are set in compliance with national policy and follow the larger policy lines on climate change, instead of seeking to promote their own interests (Stensdal, 2009, p. 61). What has been observed by other researchers concerning the lack of autonomy for NGOs and seen in this case study is here confirmed. However, it can also be argued that autonomy may be achieved by working with the existing political system in China. That is what most Chinese NGOs do, and it makes them less non-governmental as seen by international NGOs (Xie, 2009; Interview 4, 2012).

Being dependent on the state (or being less autonomous from it) also means that some organisations fare much better than others in terms of mobilising public support or achieving organisational stability. The lack of autonomy and NGO performance are related. The question of performance, hence capacity and credibility, will be discussed under section 6.3 as it crucial to CYCAN and C-CAN as regards how they conduct campaigns and as a main reason why their agendas emphasise capacity building. Nonetheless, Lu (2009) has noted that officially registered NGOs have greater capacity and credibility to conduct successful campaigns in China. The funding from the state and the legitimacy accorded to an NGO as a partly state corporate organ strengthens credibility, giving it a position that enables it to be more successful (Lu, 2009). The benefits of cooperation with the state can serve as a clear incentive for achieving close relations to state agencies in order for ENGOS to conduct their campaigns. Such ‘dependence’ on the state can be said to be a well-understood strategy used by ENGOS. C-CAN’s strong link to CANGO is not completely a ‘top-down’ approach (as implied above), but also a ‘bottom-up’ approach, because C-CAN has learnt that cooperation with the state can make campaigning more effective (informal interview 4, 2012). According to Lu (2009, pp. 21–22), NGOs gain political legitimacy by showing that they accept the existing political order and conform to state ideology; the type of legitimacy is also crucial to the survival of an NGO in China. However, we should also note that some NGOs relinquish autonomy so that the organisation can better promote the interests of its members (Lu, 2009, p. 47). In the case of CYCAN, dependence on the state is a less desirable position, because it may constrain campaign goals. CYCAN has opted for a low-key strategy to prevent interference from the state, whereas C-CAN places importance on collaborating with the state.

Lu also holds that ‘just because an NGO is launched by a government agency, with government resources, that does not mean it will not find ways to pursue its own agenda’ (Lu, 2009, p. 30). Even if using

government resources is not the case in this report, where we analyse non-officially registered NGOs, this point should be kept in mind. The registration category of an ENGO can determine its autonomy. As my interviews indicate, some organisations interact with the state because they find this advantageous. However, interaction with the state is more pronounced in C-CAN than in CYCAN.

Due to the legal framework for NGOs, they must either cooperate with the state, or else operate as a non-officially registered NGO. To gain more autonomy, organisations use various methods, like networking and financial independence. Many officially registered NGOs overcome autonomy constraints by using personal relations, achieving financial independence, finding powerful patrons and offering their supervisory agencies benefits in exchange for more freedom. This is the case for non-officially registered NGOs as well, where C-CAN is a good example (Lu, 2009, p. 43). By overcoming these various constraints the organisations are not working in opposition to the state: on the contrary, they are connected with it through various ties (Alpermann, 2010, p. 125). This can be seen as a way of leading leaders to become better leaders.

In China, the question of autonomy/dependence on the state is vital for an ENGO's existence as well as for its own identity, strategies and campaigns. As mentioned, the question of the influence and discipline between ENGOs and the state is a difficult one (Østerud, 2007). What makes this particularly interesting are the strategies and approaches used by ENGOs in order for them to exist in the political landscape to which they must relate.

In the next section, we turn to the emergence of societal corporatist mechanisms in China. How have ENGOs pursued and taken advantage of more 'bottom-up' mechanisms? And how do they use them in following their own interests?

6.3 Agenda-Setting Power under Societal Corporatism

Societal corporatism is a political arrangement based on interest organisations interacting with state mechanisms (Store Norske Leksikon, 2012). The emergence of societal corporatism in China after the economic reforms has been noted by scholars (Saich, 2011). And, with this trend to societal corporatism, it may be assumed that ENGOs have more possibilities for interaction and greater power to set their own agendas.

The agenda-setting power of China's ENGOs is not something determined solely by the state. Drawing on other scholars' research into the emergence of societal corporatism, in this report I explore how the international climate change negotiations, the online media and financial donors are all part of the picture. These factors are just a few of many noticeable factors of societal corporatism. Also other interest groups are relevant for studying interaction with the Chinese state on issues of climate change mitigation. Intergovernmental organisations, such as the UN, and research associations, such as the NCSC, are also pertinent;

however, space constraints prevent me from including them in the present report.²⁹

6.3.1 *International Climate Change Negotiations*

We have already discussed the international climate change negotiations and the obstacles the international dimensions impose on ENGOs when working on domestic climate change issues. Here, however, we should note one very important factor likely to link international climate change negotiations as a factor that enhances the scope of the ENGOs agenda setting: that is the pressure these negotiations place on the Chinese state. This pressure interacts with the state in both the development and implementation of climate change policies, as well as being a factor that provides backup and leeway for the ENGOs to promote their own climate change agendas. The ENGOs, to varying degrees, want to participate in the international negotiations – both to contribute to and to learn from them. Despite the obstacles caused by climate change being a sensitive topic for China, the international negotiations on climate change place external pressure on the Chinese state, which China has been willing to accept in part, as seen with the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in 2002. The international negotiations are already putting pressure on China to take action; and that is an advantage for the ENGOs when they communicate their interests to the Chinese state.

As regards the slogan ‘Chinese first, global citizen second’ (The Economist, 2010), in one interview it was noted that a comparable attitude could be found in the various ENGOs interviewed in relation to the international climate change negotiations. The two organisations have no desire to place the Chinese state in the international crossfire, nor do their agendas emphasise this: it is not seen as advantageous for the ENGOs to make their own state ‘lose face’ on the international arena (Interview 5, 2012). This statement underscores nationality and was mentioned as an important attitude in the interviewee’s organisation. There is a sense of gratitude for being a part of the great development China has experienced in recent decades, with its many benefits. The ENGOs realise the inherent and undesirable conflict in putting the state to shame for emitting so much CO₂ while at the same time enjoying the fruits of the development that led to these emissions (Interview 5, 2012). I believe this is a genuine wish on the part of the ENGOs, although it may also be a way of avoiding sensitive political topics, the three-dimensional dilemma discussed in chapter 4.

6.3.2 *The Use of Media Online*

Some ENGOs use the media quite actively to communicate their cases and to shape public opinion (Schröder, 2011, p. 11). Here I am referring to online Chinese newspapers and social media. Both CYCAN and C-CAN have their own home pages and *Weibo* accounts. CYCAN is also

²⁹ For further reading, see Stensdal (2012) Presenting an extensive analysis of the policy change of the past 20 years and the actors involved, Stensdal concludes that are indications of an emerging climate change policy sub-system in China.

active in additional social media accounts. However, neither CYCAN nor C-CAN has been yet begun to use these Internet platforms to any great extent by 2012. Both organisations said in interviews that they wanted to put more effort into online activity when they could find the capacity to do so (Interviews 1, 2 and 3, 2012). At present, their messages are spread through the meeting platform in C-CAN and on the home pages of both organisations.

Today, the media in China are no longer exclusively a mouthpiece for the government (Zhan, 2011, p. 155). That is one of the reasons why I chose to categorise the use of media as a part of 'societal corporatism'. In their discussion paper on China's capacities for mitigating climate change, Richerzhagen and Scholz hold that the media is a vital mediating factor in the state-society relation in China (2007, p. 21). Discussing how the Chinese media play a role in climate change issues in China is important in relation to the topic of this report: namely, to what extent Chinese ENGOs can set their own agendas, and to what extent other factors and the state determine this for them. The media in China are obliged to develop close links with state corporate organs, to be able to continue their work (Richerzhagen and Scholz, 2007, p. 21), as we also noted under the discussion of autonomy and dependence. Today, an alliance between the media and societal actors is emerging as a possible way to exert influence (Zhan, 2011, p. 115).

The release of the climate change report in December 2006 spurred the media focus on the issue in China (Wu, 2009, p. 160). At that time, most media coverage consisted of translated scientific reports or scientific news from the West on global warming, often cited matter-of-factly. In addition, very few articles linked China's CO₂ levels with the growing climate change problem (Tolan and Nan, 2007), probably for two reasons. On the one hand, climate change is a new topic that gained political recognition as a cause for concern as recently as China's 12th FYP, and thus has not been in focus in the media. On the other hand, since China's media are basically state-run, the government controls their content to a certain extent, also as regards reporting on climate change. News production in China still operates in an authoritarian political system, in which the political leadership aims to guide and control both the media and public opinion (International Media Support, February 2010). The Chinese media in general have developed significantly as a result of ideological and socio-economic changes which include commercialisation, globalisation and growing awareness of the media's social and cultural responsibilities in the public discourse (International Media Support, 2010). The 'spaces' that have opened up for journalists reporting on the environment and climate change have widened; however, the characteristics of climate change and environmental protection can be assessed only through public awareness and information (International Media Support, 2010). The media are a powerful tool for spreading a 'green message' (International Media Support, 2012) and for implementing campaigns as per agendas of the state and the ENGOs.

The opening up of the Chinese media and the *Weibo* activity on the part of Chinese netizens gained immense attention in relation to the various

political events and constellation prior to the reshuffling of the Party's Politburo in October 2012 (Rønneberg, 2012). How the media, especially *Weibo*, can be a channel for interest groups for the same purposes as the state corporate organs do, became clear from my meeting with a Chinese climate change activist who is not a member of C-CAN or CYCAN (Informal interview 3, 2012). I met this person at a workshop during my fieldwork and was told that the activist's ENGO had used an online newspaper to present the ENGO's ideas and activities to further achieve credibility among the people in the town where they were initiating a campaign. The goal was to improve conditions for bikers through better maintenance of bicycle lanes. With improved bicycle lanes, it was hoped that more people would use bikes for getting around town instead of fossil fuel driven vehicles. With more bikers, emissions from the transportation sector would decrease, bringing better air quality. To promote the ENGO's campaign, photographs were taken of places where improvements for bicycle transportation were needed. For example, pictures were taken of concrete blocks blocking the flow in bicycle lanes, and were posted on *Weibo*. Also, several activists rode their bikes around the town, placing notes on the windscreens of cars that were parked in bicycle lanes, informing the drivers of the complications and dangers that their vehicles posed for cyclists. This campaign proved successful insofar as it spurred the local government to improve conditions in bicycle lanes. Even more interesting was how the ENGO managed to get the government's attention by writing articles about the campaign in the local newspaper that resulted in a reply article from the government within days. This negotiation process between the ENGO and the town government was in retrospect praised by the local government for its persistence and successful ending (Informal interview 3, 2012).

The campaign was also noted by other participants at the workshop where this story was told, due to its communicative achievement resulting in the ENGO's voices being heard by the government in the end. However, one participant quietly noted that this process and campaign would not be possible in a bigger city, citing the insignificance of such a case where the competition between urgent emission-reduction priorities and less urgent ones has different dimensions. A success story from one ENGO in a larger city could cause a domino effect and be seen as a potential threat to social stability; however, that aspect was not taken up by the workshop participant. Neither CYCAN nor C-CAN report on similar successful media actions, but it was repeatedly mentioned how the media hold the key for all the ENGOs to spread the message both within and outside China (Interviews, 2012).³⁰

Some ENGOs that were interviewed believe the media portrayal of China in the West to be incorrect and that they shed a light on China that is very negative (Interview 3, Interview 5, 2012). Here it is considered an important task for ENGOs to communicate at home and abroad on the

³⁰ The importance of rural/urban location for ENGOs has not been included in this report; however, it is a noticeable and unquestionable influential factor for the ENGOs' agendas in terms of doing political or social work. For example, ENGOs with offices far away from the C-CAN office rarely attend network meetings with the NDRC.

actual situation through the media (Interview 3, 2012). This position, siding and strengthening the nation's position in the international media, was counterbalanced in another interview. One interviewee stressed how important it is for ENGOs to voice their own ideas in the media and use the media as a tool for empowering China's ENGOs; furthermore, to spread *their* message and thereby influence the government (Interview 5, 2012).

The media are to a larger extent conveying 'bottom-up' wishes from the ENGOs, thereby offering the ENGOs greater possibilities for interaction. However, we should bear in mind that the media can also be used to serve the Chinese government as an advantageous communicative and implementing tool. In the case of C-CAN and CYCAN, the media are more of a venue for presenting the organisations' interests and agendas.

6.3.3 *Financial Donors*

Some would argue that financial donors have just as much of a say for ENGO autonomy as does the involvement of state organs (Hulme and Edwards, 1997). Such donors move in-between state and society (Richerzhagen and Scholz, 2007). As with the international climate change negotiations and the mediating power of the media, donors can be seen as interest groups that are a result of more societal mechanisms in China. It is of interest to observe how these donors are engaging with the organisations, Chinese society and the state. It would also be very interesting to look into the background of the donors, who they are, how they select recipient organisations, how much money they donate and whether there are conditions attached. However, that is a different topic that this report does not cover.³¹ Suffice it here to note that non-officially registered ENGOs cannot exist without financial means allocated from outside the state system. This financial support is especially important when it comes to employment capacity and campaigning activities.

All ENGOs I was in contact with during my fieldwork underscored how funding raising was very time- and capacity-consuming. Without funding from any state agency, they depend on donors, often foreign companies, governments and organisations. Making private donor arrangements is one way of working 'outside the system', lessening financial dependence on the state (Lu, 2009) and offering financial autonomy to act on their agendas. In one of the interviews it was mentioned that the non-official ENGOs experience rapid staff turnover due to the low salaries, which in turn are a result of limited means available for administrative positions (Interview 5, 2012). This reshuffling is a problem not only for communication among Chinese ENGOs but also for communication with the state and with state actors (Interview 5, 2012). Good relations with state actors in powerful departments or organisations is seen as crucial for giving ENGOs a 'voice' within the state corporative organs. This point was also stressed by C-CAN (Interview 1 and 2, 2012) – hence, as we have noted, C-CAN's close relationship with CANGO. This aspect

³¹ On the relation between states, donors and NGOs, and implications for poverty reduction, see Hulme and Edwards, 1997.

should be seen in relation to earlier research on ENGO activity in China, where the assumption has been that patron–client mechanisms still play a central role (Xie, 2009; Lu, 2009; Ho and Edmonds, 2008).

China has developed at a rapid pace, and now holds the status of a middle-income country (World Bank, 2012). International expectations of an emerging class of philanthropists (*cishan*)³³ seems like a logical conclusion to that advancement (Interview 5, 2012; Informal interview 2, 2012). It has been noted that there is external pressure on prosperous Chinese companies to acknowledge their responsibilities as ‘better off’, and financially support local NGO activity (Interview 5, 2012).

A recent development noted by Chinese ENGOs as well as by the state is the tendency for international donor agencies to favour less developed countries, for example in Africa, where there is less financial capacity to support domestic NGO activity. One achievement of CANGO during 2010 was getting the right qualifications to provide tax deductions of public good and relief projects, with special emphasis on domestic donor institutions (CANGO, 2010 p. 6). This is believed to stimulate more Chinese enterprises to donate money to the Chinese NGO sector. With this campaign, CANGO, focused on a growing problem for ENGOs working outside the organs of the state. That CANGO has been negotiating on the NGOs’ behalf indicates that it is not solely a state corporate mechanism, but also a societal actor that can act to help non-officially registered organisations to attract funding.

My main reason for including financial donors in the discussion of societal corporate mechanisms is that the non-officially registered NGOs are heavily dependent on financial means from outside the state. If the financial support stops, that may be more threatening to the existence of an ENGO than actual state intervention into the affairs of the organisation.

6.3.4 *The Invitation From the ‘Top’ – Inclusion of the Public*

The national concern for climate change started emerging in recent years. The Chinese state has realised that something must be done if the country is to meet its emission reduction targets. Some have recognised that it is necessary to include the Chinese people and not only set internationally-oriented policy targets (Zou Ji, 2012). During fieldwork I got the opportunity to attend a seminar held by the UNDP on climate change. This seminar focused precisely on the importance of public participation in order for the government to succeed in meeting its FYP targets. The speaker at this seminar, deputy director of the NCSC, Professor Zou Ji, noted the importance not only of improving national climate change policies, but also of analysing consumer patterns and looking into influencing young people’s lifestyles in order to reach government targets (Zou Ji, 2012).

³³ The Chinese word for philanthropy consists of two characters *ci* (慈) and *shan* (善). *Ci* is translated as compassionate; kind; loving and *shan* is translated by good; charitable, kind.

Several recent state documents have emphasised the need for public participation as a part of solving the climate change crisis (Xinhua 2011b, chapter 4; Dong, 2010; Xie, 2009, p. 30). ‘Incorporating public and voluntary groups in environmental policy-making has been emphasized by central government in a series of documents and regulations’ (Xie, 2009, p. 30). The White Paper (*Baipishu*) on climate change issued prior to the Durban high-level meeting in 2011 highlights ‘participation of the whole society’ (Xinhua, 2011b, chapter 4). Further: ‘China proactively publicizes relevant scientific knowledge in addressing climate change, enhances public awareness of low-carbon development, gives full play to the initiatives of non-governmental organisations, the media and other outlets, and uses various channels and measures to guide the whole society to participate in actions addressing climate change’ (ibid.). This is the government’s attempt to describe the relation between climate change and public awareness as well as underscoring how the media, organisations and other channels are working together with the government. The rest chapter 4 of this White Paper concerns the media, public participation, government guidance and proactive actions by non-governmental organisations. However, given the strong evidence of how the state constrains the ‘full play to the initiatives of non-governmental organisations’ (ibid.) throughout the report, this concept of public participation can be questioned. Here it is pertinent to recall Østerud’s definition of societal corporatism, which highlights how an invitation from the ‘top’ can be seen as an indicator of societal corporatism.

It should also be mentioned that there exist factions within the state as regards preference for including or excluding ENGOs in state matters. According to my interviewees, the one side viewed ENGOs as important for the interest representation of the Chinese people, and also recognised the importance of including the people in climate change mitigation. On the other side there are other factions in the state that do not recognise the benefits of interest groups and may even see the NGO sector as a threat to the state and to a harmonious development of society (Interview 1; interview 2, 2012; Unger and Chan, 1995). NGO work is still controversial (Interview 1, 2012). In this sense I believe the ‘bridge’ Xie Zhenhua refers to in the quote at the head of this chapter will be where the ENGOs are playing a vital role. After a meeting between NGOs and the government in 2011, Xie Zhenhua, deputy director of NDRC, said in an interview with China Daily that within the recent years he has noticed how NGOs have arranged many ‘interesting and active’ events on environmental protection and climate change which help to build an environmentally-friendly and resource-saving society (Dong, 2010). Xie Zhenhua went on to emphasise that sustainable development will require the participation of all, in working to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy efficiency. Xie also welcomed NGO suggestions and advice for the government (Dong, 2010). The deputy director of the NDRC has been among the state officials more positive to the inclusion of ENGO work as regards the problems of climate change. Whether his successor will have the same positive attitude is not known; however, one C-CAN member believed that even if the leadership is reshuffled this attitude would remain in NDRC, due to the significance of the work ENGOs are doing for both the state and the society (Interview 2, 2012). As the vast majority of the Chinese public is not overly concerned about

climate change, the ENGOs have considerable importance (Schröder, 2011, p. 4).

But would the invitation from the ‘top’ have come if the ENGOs were working on an even more sensitive topic – for example, human rights? There is reason to believe that there would have been less willingness to include interest groups. The ENGOs’ agenda setting under societal corporatism would not have been that clear. The state’s dependence on the society to meet the climate change policy targets might have stimulated a recent political will to allow ENGO participation. It should also be borne in mind that the emergence of ENGOs can be seen as a strong indicator of the growing public concern that has led some people to organise themselves as ENGOs in order to deal with the problems of climate change (Schröder, 2011).

6.4 Capacity and Credibility on the Agenda

When capacity is achieved, then we can influence policies!

Interview 5, 2012

Both CYCAN and C-CAN viewed capacity building as a matter of priority, and as a central point on their agendas in order for their work to spread and gain recognition (Interviews 1, 2, 3 and 4, 2012). Several scholars (Xie, 2009; Richerzhagen and Scholz, 2007) have noted the lack of organisational capacity in Chinese ENGOs, especially in three areas. Firstly, there exist a small number of informal organisations, secondly, their resources and capacities are limited and thirdly, they have a narrow range of strategies and approaches for dealing with working areas (Xie, 2009). Lack of organisational capacity is something that influences credibility not only in the state but also in the Chinese society. At present, NGO work is accorded only scant recognition (Interview 1; informal interview 4, 2012).

One interviewee shared an experience based on the lack of credibility when volunteering in a mitigation campaign for an ENGO. The organisation had invited Chinese schools to participate in a competition where pupils were to draw posters using climate change as the motif. When the ENGO launched its campaign, most participating schools demanded to see an official document of approval, declaring that the campaign was initiated by the state. They further inquired whether the state allowed the schools to participate in this campaign (Informal interview 4, 2012). Judging from the findings of this report, cooperation with the state or a state agency might have resulted in a more successful campaign.

Capacity building is not only about financial means, as one interviewee in CYCAN pointed out (Interview 3, 2012). There are three sides to capacity. One is the financial, discussed above; the second is the quality of the action for which an organisation is specially fitted (Merriam-Webster, 2012). The third point is that ENGO capacity can be reduced because of the legal framework of NGOs that constrains the scope of their capacity. All three aspects of capacity are important to CYCAN and C-CAN and are intertwined with credibility. Both CYCAN and C-CAN

emphasised that they wanted to hand over research and reports to the state about civil responses to climate change and further present the organisations' own agendas. However, the ENGOs do not think the quality of their work is high enough to attract the attention of state organs. This indicates that the organisations recognise that knowledge, education and credibility are factors essential to the pursuit of their own agendas. And that might be one reason why they have chosen to collaborate closely with each other, so that by unifying and professionalising their voices, they can increasingly make themselves heard. The ENGOs are networking because only limited funding is available, which can put ENGOs in a competitive relationship with each other (Schröder, 2011, p. 8).

Another element of capacity is language. With exclusively domestic ENGO work in China, a second language is not necessary. However, the international dimension of climate change entails the need to understand and use English at a high level. This emerged as an unexpected finding from my fieldwork. When I asked what my interviewees saw as the main challenges for an ENGO doing work on climate change in China today, they mentioned the high level of English required (Interviews, 2012). This need to use English serves to exclude certain actors from the scene of ENGO work on climate change (Interviews, 2012). ENGO actors without a sufficient command of English are normally excluded from participating in international delegations where the communication requires good English skills (Interview 3; 4; 5; 2012).

6.4.1 Summary

We see that ENGOs in China exist within limits defined by the state, and the state can both enable and impede their development. Chinese ENGOs may be characterised as existing at a transitional level between complete dependence on the state and having some degree of autonomy from it (Whiting, 1991, p. 43). Some are organised around government-defined objectives and are perceived to lack the full autonomy believed to be the case with the close collaboration between CANGO and C-CAN. We have explored how the ENGOs' agendas are constrained and incorporated in the state –, where they may be used as 'tools' in order for the state to achieve better policy results, but also to control ENGO pressure on the state. This is evident in how the ENGOs' agendas do not challenge national climate change targets. The analysis signals that the state actors control, unify and conduct the societal sectors in this way.

At the same time, both CYCAN and C-CAN represent and present a societal concern on an issue that also concerns the state. In many ways, both organisations convey to the state a growing concern in Chinese society. The analysis here has shown how societal actors concerned with the threat of climate change – ENGOs – have been given more leeway in recent years. We have noted signs of their inclusion of the international climate change negotiations. The expanding online media, especially social media activity and online newspapers offer a venue where the ENGOs are disseminating their agendas. Moreover, financial donors could not have entered the Chinese market, had it not been for the recent economic reforms. However, their role is dual, as donors both facilitate

and challenge the ENGOS' possibilities for political interaction. Such donors are a sign of increasing societal corporate mechanisms. Because they become so essential to ENGOS, if the donations were to be withdrawn, the ENGOS' very existence could be threatened. Finally, the societal corporate mechanisms are evident in the political will to include the public, hence 'bottom-up' demands, in assessing climate change.

ENGOS can be seen as stakeholders that serve in public advice mechanisms – as with C-CAN's organisations contributing to China's Climate Change Legislation, or an environmental activist promoting a case through civil action. That various ENGOS join together through C-CAN is a sign of a connection and association across the organisations and an indicator of societal corporate mechanisms. The ENGOS present this networking approach as something chosen due to their own lack of capacity and credibility, but it seems likely that they are also riding the current wave of social corporatism, and gaining a stronger foothold in state-society relations in China.

7 Conclusions

The threat of climate change is a political concern both inside and outside of China. The state is increasingly alarmed about what the consequences of climate change might lead to in China and is now trying to address the ‘three-dimensional dilemma’ by building a low-carbon economy. The inclusion of the public is one strategy for achieving this political target. Members of the public are highly involved, as shown by this analysis of the work of societal actors in ENGOs concerned with climate change. It is in their interest to combat the threat of climate change, and to inform and engage state and society alike.

This report has presented case studies of two domestic ENGOs, CYCAN and C-CAN, and analysed their agendas. These are non-profit organisations that work to reduce the threat of climate change, primarily domestically. C-CAN is a non-registered network organisation that collaborates closely with the officially registered organisation CANGO and the climate change department of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC). C-CAN emphasises policy advocacy, climate change reduction campaigns in society, research support and collaboration involving 16 domestic ENGOs. By contrast, CYCAN is registered as a business; it emphasises raising awareness amongst youth, through climate change reduction campaigns at universities, as well as education and research support. CYCAN is a part of C-CAN’s network. The agendas of the two organisations differ in terms of whom they want to involve and reach. Obstacles they face include problems with campaign funding and outreach, credibility in the state and society, language barriers and registration status, in addition to battling the generally low interest in climate change issues in Chinese society.

To explore the ENGOs’ scope of action as regards their climate change agendas, and their relations to state actors, this report has used the theory of corporatism. The two subtypes of corporatism – societal corporatism and state corporatism – have been applied to identify and explore interaction between the ENGOs and the Chinese state. There is both change and continuity to be found in state–society relations in China (Lu, 2009, p. 136). This report has shown evidence of the continuation of the state corporate mechanisms, which means clear limitations as regards establishing factions and agendas that may threaten the state’s authority. Drawing on state corporatism, ENGOs are used as a means for the state to achieve its targets, control the opposition and gain access to the ideas of actors in society.

However, societal changes since the 1980s have led to the growth of societal corporate mechanisms that interact with both the state and society, also as regards combating the threat of climate change. The international climate change negotiations, the frequent use of online media and various financial donors gaining access to the Chinese market have all entered the climate change and NGO arena, and are contributing to the growth of societal corporate mechanisms. The analysis in the present report has verified the initial assumption, that the growth of societal corporatist mechanisms in China has led to greater political

interaction possibilities for ENGOs. The growth of societal corporate mechanisms does indeed affect the interaction between the state and society and the ENGOs' agenda-setting opportunities. However, the scope as regards ENGOs' agenda-setting is not necessarily expanding. We have seen how societal corporatist mechanisms are still under the influence of state control; furthermore, shortages in funding constrain the organisations' scope for action.

This report has explored to what extent Chinese ENGOs can set and pursue their own agendas related to climate change mitigation, and to what extent the Chinese state and other factors determine those agendas for them. In every state–society relation there exists tension between participation and discipline of actors. It is never easy to decide what is determined by what or by whom. In addition, corporatist theory offers a broad definition of the two units, state and society, where it has been suggested that the complexity between the two is characterised as more general than particular. If viewed in light of, for example the patron–client mechanism, this particularisation might have revealed other aspects within this complexity. However, throughout the analysis I have offered some observations on the extent of independent and less independent agenda setting for the two ENGOs, using corporatist theory.

Both CYCAN and C-CAN are to a large extent *pursuing* their own agendas. The two organisations conduct their work and campaigns on the basis of their own interests: to combat climate change, to network and to raise awareness. However, their agendas do not extend beyond China's national climate change policy targets, and thus do not stand in opposition to the state. Even if the ENGOs are pursuing their own agendas, we must ask to what extent they are able to *set* their own agendas. Due to the tight link CANGO and NDRC have with both C-CAN and its network organisations, it is difficult to conclude about the underlying premises as regards agenda setting. Both ENGOs agree that to demand more climate change action domestically would put pressure on China in the international negotiations: this is a sensitive topic for ENGO involvement, as it points back to their less progressive agendas. On the other hand, in connection with this study, the fieldwork and interviews, I found no clear indications that the ENGOs wanted to set other or more challenging agendas than they already have.

Other factors that determine the ENGOs' agendas are how the international climate change negotiations and the ENGOs' joint targets support each other. We have also seen how online media activity is an important for presenting climate change agendas and activity. Further, we note two very different aspects of reliance on financial donors, so essential to the survival of these ENGOs. On the one hand, such funding makes it possible for these ENGOs to pursue their agendas. On the other hand, as noted here, the possible withdrawal of funding poses a greater threat to the existence of the ENGOs than is state intervention.

The two ENGOs studied here have, in exchange for collaborating closely with an officially registered ENGO and NDRC, presumably come to set less challenging agendas – but they have also gained greater possibilities for political interaction. My findings on C-CAN's position as a non-

official registered ENGO collaborating with the state challenges previous research on how China's strict legislation procedures for ENGOs act to constrain their work. We have seen that there are possibilities for non-official registered entities outside the state to engage in concerns of interest to the state. Moreover, this collaboration and 'invitation from the top' is also a clear sign of how the growing societal corporate mechanisms are gaining a foothold in China. Since the threat of climate change is of high priority to the state, there is reason to believe that the role played by these ENGO in Chinese society serves as a timely way of raising public awareness about a concern that is bound to affect society. As the state is openly cooperating with a non-registered entity, it might appear that the importance of battling climate change together with societal actors outweighs enforcing legal procedures. However, there might also be other, more opaque, reasons for this collaboration, such as financial motives.

It will be of interest for future research to examine whether the extent of ENGO collaboration with the state will diminish if the climate change storm gains force, or if societal actors become too challenging. Will this be the situation for CYCAN and C-CAN? Or is climate change such a crucial topic in China that the state will continue to include the work of ENGOs in the future? The signs of a larger extent of societal corporate mechanisms give Chinese ENGOs possibilities for political interaction. However, if one of these mechanisms, such as donor activity, should cease, that could threaten the ENGO agendas severely. In some ways, this has been a preliminary exploration of a central issue. Investigating the dynamics and tension within the societal corporate mechanisms themselves and how they challenge the ENGOs is an important topic for extended research.

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Appendix 1

Interview overview

Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	March and April 2012, China.
Informal interviews 1, 2, 3, 4	March 2012, China.

Table 5: Overview of interviews

Appendix 2

Chinese names and expressions

Chapter 2

Hexie shehui 和谐社会

Chapter 4

Beijing Guoan 北京国安

Baipishu 白皮书

Fei zhengfu zuzhi 非政府组织

Gonggong canyu 公共参与

Jijinhui 基金会

Minban feiqiye danwei 民办非企业单位

Minjian zuzhi 民间组织

Qunzhong tuanti 群众团体

Renmin tuanti 人民团体

Shehui tuanti 社会团体

Shetuan 社团

Wangluo 网络

Yewu zhuguan danwei 业务主管单位

Chapter 5

CANGO 中国国际民间组织合作促进会

CCAN 中国民间气候变化行动网络

CDM Club of Beijing University 北京大学请活发展机制研究会

China Green Student Forum 北京绿色大学生论坛

China Youth Climate Action Network (CYCAN)

中国青年应对气候变化行动网络

China's Green Beat 中国绿色脉搏

C+shidian C+试点

Douban 豆瓣

Envirofriends Institute of Environmental Science and Technology

环友科学技术研究中心 (环友科技)

Friends of Green Environment Jiangsu 江苏绿色之友

Friends of Nature 自然之友

Global Village of Beijing 北京地球村环境教育中心

Gongzhong canyu 公众参与

Gongzhong de renwei 公众的认为

Green Anhui Environmental Development Centre

安徽绿满江淮环境发展中心

Green Earth Volunteers 绿家园志愿者

Greenriver Environment Protection Association of Sichuan

四川少省绿色江河环境保护促进会

Guancha yuan 观察员

Guoji qingnian nengyuan yu qihou bianhua fenghui

国际青年能源与气候变化峰会

Heinrich Böll Foundation 伯尔基金会

Institute for Environment and Development (IED)

道和环境于发展研究所

International Union for Conservation of Nature 世界自然保护联盟

Lianhe lilian 联合力量

Lianhe xingdong 联合行动

Lüse chuxing 绿色出行

Mubiao 目标

Natural Resources and Defence Council 美国自然资源保护委员会

Promotion Association for Mountain-River-Lake Regional Sustainable Development (MRLSD) 江西山江湖可持续发展促进会

Qihou bianhua lifa jiaoliu hui 气候变化立法交流会

Renren 人人

Shanghai Oasis Ecological Conservation Communication Centre

(OASIS) 上海绿洲生态保护交流中心

Shanshui Conservation Centre 山水自然保护中心

Solargeneration-Greenpeace 绿色和平-新能源一代

Taking it Global-China 全球青年社会—中国

The Asia Foundation 亚洲基金会

The Climate Group 气候组织

The College Environmental Groups Forum in China
中国大学生环境组织合作论坛

The Nature Conservancy 大自然保护协会

UNEP-TUNZA-NEAYEN 联合国东北亚青年环境网络

Weibo 微博

Xiamen Green Cross Association (XMGCA)
厦门市绿十字环保志愿者中心

Xiangmu 项目

Youku 优酷

Yuanjing 远景

Zhongdian 重点

Zhongguo gaoxiao nenghao shuju diaoyan 中国高校能耗数据调研

Chapter 6

Cishan 慈善

Gong gong xing dong 公共行动

The Fridtjof Nansen Institute is a non-profit, independent research institute focusing on international environmental, energy, and resource management. The institute has a multi-disciplinary approach, with main emphasis on political science and international law. It collaborates extensively with other research institutions in Norway and abroad.



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