The Diplomatic Making of EU-China Relations: Structure, Substance and Style

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Abstract

The existing scholarly literature on EU-China relations is characterised by a dichotomous distinction between material and ideational factors and overemphasises the 'interest versus values' motif undergirding EU-China relations. The enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building is compounded with a 'relational gap' in diplomatic studies. There is a dearth of a systemic theoretical framework that integrates the various dimensions of diplomatic relationship-building to interpret the dynamics of the process of diplomatic relationship-building. This study advances a novel theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building and an associated social-network based research methodology to explore the making of EU-China relations through two in-depth case studies: the negotiations of the EU-China landmark agreement – the *Agreement on Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications* (2009-2019) and the flagship EU-China climate-related bilateral cooperation – the EU-China Emission Trading System Project (2010-2019). The study purports that the making of EU-China relations is a process influenced by three essential elements – structural coordination, negotiations of technical and political substance, and the dialogue between the EU's 'walk the talk' diplomatic style and China's 'shoulder responsibility' diplomatic style. The process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building is shaped by the fundamental underpinning of the relationship, encapsulated in EU-China shared intentions, which endow the EU and China with a 'we-feeling' that invokes shared vision and conveys the potential to unite the two parties. In so doing, the work provides a new theoretical arsenal to understand EU-China relations in a way that captures not only the 'relational' nature of diplomatic relationship-building but also takes us beyond the binary understanding of interests and values as sole motives in fostering international diplomacy, by integrating the social layer of 'intentions' in understanding diplomatic relationship-building. This work transcends traditional research in International Relations and has broader implications for exploring means by which the EU-China relationship can be better evaluated, managed and enhanced.

Acknowledgements

Sino-European relationship is more than a doctoral thesis. It is my vocation. Living between Europe and China since childhood has constantly diluted my feelings of true belonging in both regions, I have come to embrace my identity in-between these two places and feel a special responsibility to bridge China and Europe.

One's doctoral thesis is only part of one's life-long journey of intellectual adventure. It is only made possible by the mentors one is lucky to have from the very start of the pursuit of knowledge, truth, and freedom. Monsieur Menant guided me into the humanities and channelled my passion for all things French into writing. His erudite and elegant style in intellectual endeavours is my inspiration for a lifetime. Christopher Coker introduced me to the academic world of international relations and diplomacy, his writings and lectures still hold the same resonance for me the same way I first walked into his classes many years ago. Sir Colin Lucas believed in me when I doubted myself, encouraged me to be patient in following my passion long before I started this doctoral journey. During challenging times of my doctoral research, his humour brought the DPhil into perspective. I am grateful to my doctoral supervisor Corneliu Bjola, without his guidance and faith in the project, this thesis would not have come into fruition.

The peripatetic nature of working on EU-China relations has given me so much joy, enriched me with so many experiences that I will treasure for a lifetime. The countless people involved in EU-China relations, especially in the institutions in Brussels and Beijing generously granted me their time to talk about EU-China relations. They have not only infused energy into my research, but their professionalism, integrity and humanity have shone a light so brightly in the making of my doctoral thesis, for that alone, I am infinitely grateful.

Life is more than a doctoral thesis. My parents' love has always inspired me to reach for the stars, their wisdom has always been my anchor. I would like to thank my loving grandparents and the whole family for being in my life.

The making of this thesis is an emotional journey like no other. Every place this DPhil journey has taken me to, and every person I have encountered have made me believe, more than ever, that behind the façade of nationality, of education, of cultural background, we are all humans, with finite time of existence, yet with infinite potential. In this ephemeral existence, it is worthwhile to chase the eternal.

I would swim all the oceans, move all the mountains, to be here again, to be between Europe and China. Thank you Love, thank you Life.

À l'éternel.

Table of Content

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION 13

1.1 Preface 13

1.2 Empirical imperative 15

1.3 Theoretical imperative 19

1.4 Research strategy 22

1.4.1 A theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building 22

1.4.2 A qualitative and social network analytical methodology 26

1.4.3 Two in-depth case studies 28

1.5 Sketch of the thesis 30

CHAPTER 2 UNDERSTANDING EU-CHINA RELATIONS 32

2.1 Introduction 32

2.2 Contextualising EU-China relations 32

2.2.1 Realist understanding of EU-China relations 33

2.2.2 Constructivist understanding of EU-China relations 38

2.2.3 Liberal understanding of EU-China relations 45

2.3 The enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building 48

2.4 Conclusion 55

CHAPTER 3 THEORISING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING 57

3.1 Introduction 57

3.2 Deciphering diplomatic relationship-building 58

3.3 Shared intentions 74

3.4 Three constitutive elements of diplomatic relationship-building 82

3.4.1 Constitutive theorising 82

3.4.2 Three essential elements 85

3.5 Theoretical model of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building 99

3.6 Conclusion 110

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 112

4.1 Introduction 112

4.2 Social network analysis and diplomatic studies 112

4.3 Navigating social network analysis 118

4.3.1 Centrality 119

4.3.2 Strong and weak ties 122

4.4 A three-step process 125

4.5 Case study selection 132

4.6 Data collection 135

4.7 Conclusion 137

CHAPTER 5 MAKING EU-CHINA AGRICULTURAL-TRADE RELATIONS 139

5.1 Introduction 139

5.2 Background 140

5.2.1 The diplomacy of EU-China agricultural trade 140
5.2.2 The importance of geographical indications 142

5.3 Structure 147
5.3.1 Institutional actors 147
5.3.2 Institutional mechanisms 158
5.3.3 Structural coordination and EU-China shared intentions in EU-China agricultural-trade diplomacy 165

5.4 Substance 175
5.4.1 Development of the negotiation 178
5.4.2 Negotiating substance and EU-China shared intentions in EU-China agricultural-trade diplomacy 192

5.5 Style 201
5.5.1 EU agricultural-trade diplomatic style 201
5.5.2 Chinese agricultural-trade diplomatic style 208
5.5.3 Diplomatic styles and EU-China shared intentions in EU-China agricultural-trade diplomacy 213

5.6 Conclusion 224

CHAPTER 6 MAKING EU-CHINA CLIMATE CHANGE RELATIONS 228

6.1 Introduction 228

6.2 Background 229
6.2.1 Climate diplomacy 229
6.2.2 Decarbonisation action 233

6.3 Structure 237
6.3.1 Institutional actors 237

6.3.2 Institutional mechanisms 248
6.3.3 Structural coordination and EU-China shared intentions in EU-China climate change diplomacy 254
6.4 Substance 263
6.4.1 Development of EU-China ETS collaboration 266
6.4.2 Negotiating substance and EU-China shared intentions in EU-China climate change diplomacy 279
6.5 Style 286
6.5.1 EU climate change diplomatic style 287
6.5.2 Chinese climate change diplomatic style 292
6.5.3 Diplomatic styles and EU-China shared intentions in EU-China climate change diplomacy 298
6.6 Conclusion 305
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION 310
7.1 Epilogue 310
7.2 The value of diplomatic relationship-building theory 312
7.3 The making and remaking of EU-China relations 315
7.3.1 The similarities 317
7.3.2 The differences 322
7.3.3 EU-China shared intentions 326
7.4 Policy implications 329
Bibliography 332

Annex …...……366

List of Figures

Figure 1 Theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building.....101

Figure 2 EU-China agricultural-trade network.....149

Figure 3 Central institutional actors in EU-China agricultural-trade relations 152

Figure 4 Institutional actors in EU-China agricultural-trade relations.....167

Figure 5 Institutional mechanisms in EU-China agricultural-trade negotiations.....171

Figure 6 Formal negotiation rounds 176

Figure 7 Negotiation timeline.....178

Figure 8 GIs of the '10+10' Pilot Project 183

Figure 9 EU-China climate change network 238

Figure 10 Central institutional actors in EU-China climate change relations 241

Figure 11 Institutional actors in EU-China climate change relations.....256

Figure 12 Institutional mechanisms in EU-China climate change relations 260

Figure 13 Cooperation timeline.....266

Abbreviation

AQSIQ	General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China
BusinessEurope	Confederation of European Business
CAS	Chinese Academy of Sciences
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCPIT	China Council for the Promotion of International Trade
CICIR	China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations
CIIS	China Institute of International Studies
CNOOC	China National Offshore Oil Corporation
CSG	China Southern Power Grid Co., Ltd.
Chinese Mission to the EU	Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union
Council of the EU	Council of the European Union
Datang	China Datang Corporation
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission
DG CLIMA	Directorate-General for Climate Action of the European Commission
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission
DG ENER	Directorate-General for Energy of the European Commission
DG GROW	Directorate-General for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs of the European Commission
DG ENVI	Directorate-General for Environment of the European Commission
DG RTD	Directorate-General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission
DG TRADE	Directorate General for Trade of the European Commission
Huadian	China Huadian Corporation Ltd.
Huaneng	China Huaneng Group Co., Ltd.
Guodian	China Guodian Corporation
JRC	Joint Research Centre of the European Commission
EP	European Parliament
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU Delegation to China	The Delegation of the European Union to China
EUCCC	European Union Chamber of Commerce in China
EUCBA	EU–China Business Association
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office
MEE	Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People’s Republic of China
MIIT	Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of the People’s Republic of China
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China
MOFCOM	Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China

MOF	Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China
MoHURD	Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China
MoST	Ministry of Science and Technology of China
NCSC	National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China
NEA	National Energy Administration
NEC	National Energy Commission
NPC	National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China
PetroChina	PetroChina Company Limited
SAIC	State Administration For Industry & Commerce of the People’s Republic of China
State Council	State Council of the People's Republic of China
Sinocarbon	SinoCarbon Innovation & Investment Co., Ltd.
SINOPEC	China Petrochemical Corporation
SPIC	State Power Investment Corporation Limited
State Grid	State Grid Corporation China

独上高楼，望尽天涯路。

-晏殊

《蝶恋花·槛菊愁烟兰泣露》

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté. Luxe, calme et volupté.

- Charles Baudelaire
L'Invitation au Voyage

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time.

- T.S. Eliot
Little Gidding

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Preface

The rise of China and the future of Europe are two of the most salient questions of world politics today. The European Union (EU) is the world's largest trading power and is becoming more determined in exerting influence in a world of increasing uncertainty, complexity and change (European Council, 2019). China's development has made inevitable China's rise to global power status with a growing diplomatic presence in international affairs. EU-China relations have intensified and expanded since the establishment of the formal diplomatic ties in 1975, and particularly over the past decade. Not only do the EU and China form the second-largest economic cooperation in the world, the EU-China relationship encompasses a broadening range of ties, becoming a multifaceted relationship of global significance. Making EU-China relations work has never been more potent in a 'world of strangers' and uncharted diplomatic waters. As the EU Ambassador to China stated 'the world of today requires a strong partnership between the EU and China providing stability on the global stage. We must – and do – work together on an ever-increasing number of issues' (Schweisgut, 2017).

Indeed, EU-China engagement increasingly calls for robust commitment and concerted efforts to strengthen economic, political and cultural synergies between the EU and China. However, few can fully grasp the level of engagement and the depth of the relationship; the multitudes of engagement and processes by which the EU and China work together and build their relationship seem as opaque as their extent remains incalculably complex. The

increasing clout and complexity of EU-China relations, and the mysteries surrounding the way in which to manage and enhance the relationship inspire the core research endeavour of this thesis, namely to illuminate the making of EU-China relations, in particular, the dynamic, byzantine process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. The idea is that only when one can comprehend the relationship-building process of EU-China relations, can one better evaluate, manage and enhance EU-China relations, and be able to better strategise concrete and potentially more effective actions to influence EU-China relationship-building. It is in this light that this thesis explores the essential process of diplomatic relationship-building addressing the core question: How do the essential elements of EU-China relations influence diplomatic relationship-building? The thesis purports that the diplomatic relationship-building process of EU-China relations is, in essence, a process of building EU-China shared intentions that is made possible and shaped by the constitutive three building blocks of structure, substance and style. Central to the argument is that a comprehension of the EU-China relationship has to reckon with the determining factors of diplomatic relationship-building which entails the institutional structure, the substance under negotiation and the diplomatic styles of the EU and China; and that a robust understanding of EU-China relations has to take into account the fundamental underpinning that is EU-China shared intentions undergirding the relationship-building process.

The thesis develops a theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building that is emancipated from the shadows of international relations paradigms to elucidate the enigma of diplomatic relationship-building between the EU and China. Anchored in diplomatic studies, the study integrates insights from negotiation studies, the philosophy of social

reality, constitutive theorising and social network analysis to formulate and implement a theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building in the exploration of the making of EU-China relations. Guided by the theoretical propositions, the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building is explored in-depth in two case studies: the EU-China negotiations of the landmark agreement – the *Agreement on Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications* (2009-2019) and the flagship EU-China climate-related bilateral cooperation initiative – the EU-China Emission Trading System Project (2010-2019). In so doing, the study offers a more integrative way of theorising diplomatic relationship-building, and sheds new light on the dynamics of EU-China relations, revealing the essential factors that inhere in the relationship while inspiring new ways to better manage and build Sino-European synergies. The remainder of this introductory chapter will synthesise the empirical and theoretical imperatives for investigating the diplomatic making of EU-China relations and sketch the outline of the thesis.

1.2 Empirical imperative

The foremost imperative of this research endeavour is empirical which is to illuminate *the enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building*. The scholarly renderings of EU-China relations are characterised by a dichotomous distinction between material and ideational factors, entrenched in the competing theories in the field of International Relations. Realist theories of international relations emphasise strategic interests as the core incentive for EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. Constructivist theories of international relations valorise the non-material factors in fostering the relationship. Liberal theories of international relations magnify the institutional foundations of

EU-China cooperation. The tendency in the existing scholarship is a narrow focus on specific components of decision-making without sufficient consideration of how the myriad factors constitute, interact and influence EU-China relations. The silence in these undertakings is the actual processes whereby certain factors, be they identities, interests or institutions are transformed to influence EU-China relations. While each of the IR paradigms encompasses factors previously excluded or omitted, the IR oriented approaches often 'yield similar, or at least complementary, accounts of international politics as in essence the approaches are studying the same underlying reality' (Wendt and Fearon, 2002). They yield insufficient explanation of how the EU and China translate their respective diplomatic objectives, shared interests or divergent values into the EU and China working together, which constitute the enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

This enigma is most manifest in the ebb and flow of Sino-European relations. Europe's engagement with China is characterised by centuries of reciprocal influences between the two ends of the Eurasian continental landmass. From the ancient silk traffic, through the intellectual and artistic exchanges between European missionaries and Chinese mandarins during the 17th and 18th centuries, to today's comprehensive EU-China strategic partnership, links between Europe and China have long existed at the economic, social, political and cultural levels. Europe as an intellectual entity has always featured in the Chinese cultural imagination, and its meaning has also exerted influence over Sino-European encounter. The idea of Europe as the cradle of so many humanistic and intellectual movements evokes in many Chinese the spirit of great humane ideas such as the Hellenic philosophical tradition, the Roman legal tradition, the promotion of freedom

and emancipation during the Enlightenment, the advancement of science in the nineteenth century, and the importance of research and technology in the twentieth century.[1]

With the full establishment of EU-China relations in 1975, EU-China relations have evolved from the EU and China being 'distant neighbours' (Kapur, 1990), 'strategic partners' to 'systemic rivals' and 'negotiation partners'.[2] In all three China's policy papers on the EU issued respectively in 2003, 2014 and 2018, China considers the EU as a 'major force in the world' and value the necessity to 'build strategic consensus and deepen mutual trust' between the EU and China. In the most recent EU's policy paper on China, the EU stated that the EU's China policy is increasingly 'more realistic, assertive, and multi-faceted' in light of the EU and China being 'linked by an enduring relationship' with increasing common responsibilities and shared commitments in global governance. Sino-European relations are characterised by periods of rapid rapprochement, punctuated by moments of contention, and enriched by phases of intense cooperation.

Nevertheless, existing interpretations of EU-China relations do not adequately expound on the pendulum swing of cooperation and contention in the relationship. The existing scholarly explanations of EU-China relations do not elicit a convincing conclusion whether the EU-China relationship is driven by a purely transactional interest-based logic or a value-based rationale. It is equally difficult to explain the factors accounting for the rapid transformation of the multifaceted relationship. The EU and China seems to be so far yet so close. The making of EU-China relations is underpinned at least as much in the realm of interests as in the domain of values. Despite the valuable insights about EU-China

[1] See 'So far, so close?: EU-China network diplomacy', in *The Diplomat*, 17 January 2016
[2] See for example, European Commission, EU-China – A strategic outlook, 12 March 2019

relations yielded by IR theoretical models, the existing works are invariably imbued with a sense of 'winner takes call', that the relationship is built upon either economic interests or political calculations. Many of the conclusions about EU-China relations have been deduced from the assumptions of 'anarchy' 'ideas' or 'institutions', nested in the ontological constraints of IR theories. These 'thin' models oversimplify the complex picture of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building and overemphasise the 'interests versus values' motif undergirding EU-China relations.

The lack of understanding of the process of diplomatic relationship-building between the EU and China remains an enigma entailing two conundrums in need to be addressed. The first conundrum is related to the level of analysis issue in the investigation of EU-China relations. The EU and China have been taken for granted as *homogenous unitary actors* in the IR discussions. The existing scholarship that is embroiled in the divide between material and ideational explanations normally examine the state-level interactions and only brush the surface of the multi-layered diplomatic interactions, rendering the fact that most explanations have not taken into account the growing multiplicity of actors, mechanisms and the multifaceted nature of the relationship. The existing theoretical explanations of EU-China relations have failed to generate much agreement on the actual process of making the relationship.

The second conundrum of the enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building is that the traditional IR-infused scholarly attempts to elucidate EU-China diplomacy have not yet sufficiently and systematically responded to the rapid complexity of EU-China dynamics. They have not fully explored the variances of the myriad factors fostering the ebb and flow

of Sino-European diplomacy. Nor do they adequately explain the convergence between the EU and China on some issue areas or the divergence between the EU and China in other policy areas. Existing scholarship do not provide convincing reasons for the discrepancy of diplomatic relationship-building in the wide range of issue area. Moreover, the subtleties in cross-cultural communication and negotiation in EU-China relations are lost in translation and overgeneralisation of the IR theoretical models. In short, the magnitude of EU-China ties pervades a plethora of policy areas and sectors, yet the constellations of actors involved, the channels of diplomatic engagement and policy actions that vary in significance across different dimensions of the multifaceted relationship remain an enigma.

1.3 Theoretical imperative

In light of the empirical puzzle, the second imperative of investigating the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building is theoretical, which entails addressing the *'relational gap'* in theorising relationship-building in diplomatic studies. Deeply embedded in the scholarly approaches to diplomatic relationship-building is the dichotomy of the interest-driven and value-driven schools of thought. The interest-based school of thought is rationalist in orientation, in that the interest-based school of thought purport that diplomatic relations are formed on a strong basis of interests. Rationalists argue that diplomatic relationship-building is predominantly interest-based and diplomatic practices are primarily associated with purely transactional negotiations involving the exchange of solely brute interests. Relationships are thus fragile, volatile and ephemeral. On the other hand, the value-based school of thought is of constructivist vein that 'rests on a deeper and broader ontology, thereby providing a richer understanding of some phenomena and shedding light on other aspects of international life' that do not exist within the realist

rending of international relations (Ruggie, 1998, p.883). This school of thought valorises primarily a value-based diplomatic interaction that is conducive to building a robust and enduring relationship. However, like all the debate in the field of international relations, 'no approach can sustain claims to monopoly on truth – or even on useful insights', as 'the strength of each approach is also the source of its major weakness' (Ruggie, 1998). The factors driving diplomatic relationship-building can be conceptualised along a continuum from 'hard core interests' to 'soft intangible values', the distinction between hard interests and soft values dissolves in real-time diplomacy. Like a pendulum swing, diplomatic relationships can swing from an interests-driven relationship to a values-oriented relationship depending on the circumstances.

Although the two major schools of thought differ in many respects, they provide a circumscribed view of diplomatic relationship-building, lacking theoretical innovations from premising solely on IR precepts. The existing scholarship seems contestable. In essence, the process whereby relationship-building takes place has been taken for granted in the sense that 'people assume (it) to be so without questioning its empirical or normative validity' (Hopf, 2013). As Hopf contends, 'what is 'taken for granted' may be so commonplace it is never articulated. Taken-for-granted common sense goes unchallenged or uncontested. In other words, there is a kind of consensus about what the world is, or should be, that often goes without saying. But when it is said, most people say more or less the same thing' (Hopf, 2013, p. 324). The same is true for the IR interpretations of EU-China relations. The actual process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building has been taken for granted, without being substantially articulated and assessed.

Moreover, the lack of a robust theoretical understanding of the process of diplomatic relationship-building have not yet benefited from the rich empirical descriptions of EU-China relations, and most are often lost in the mists of cross-disciplinary compartmentalisation. The 'resistance to theory' that diplomacy studies has exhibited (Der Derian 1987; Constantinou 1996; Murray 2008; Sharp, 2009) is similar to what Raymond Aron writes about the contrast between empirical and theoretical interpretations of international relations, which is 'comparable to the difference between a photograph and a painted portrait. The photograph shows everything that can be seen by the naked eye. The painted portrait does not show everything that can be seen by the naked eye, but it shows something the naked eye cannot see: the human essence of the person who is portrayed' (Aron, 1966, p.3). The underlying theoretical impediment is that there lack a synthetic analysis and richly developed theoretical framework bringing the various dimensions of diplomatic relationship-building together to interpret the dynamism of diplomatic interactions, to understand the forces which may promote or hinder diplomatic relationship-building, and to better comprehend the social 'density' underpinning diplomatic interactions.

The interest-based and value-based schools of thought in the existent academic literature provide no concrete explanation to the core question that the thesis seeks to illuminate, as to the factors at play influencing the process of diplomatic interactions in EU-China relations. The IR paradigms place diplomatic relationship-building on a continuum between brute interests and intangible values, that do not shed convincing light on the conditions under which EU-China relations are more conflictual or cooperative. Moreover, they do not take into consideration the way in which various elements of

relationship-building are transformed in the process to shape, through means of enhancing or obstructing relationship-building. In so doing, they fail to provide an integrative framework that embeds the patterns of diplomatic encounters to decipher the dynamics and nuances of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

1.4 Research strategy

In essence, the enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building is compounded by the lack of understanding of the nature of the beast – diplomatic relationship-building. The theoretical and empirical imperatives necessitate a new theoretical model wider to open up the theoretical boundaries and confines of current scholarship, deeper to encompass the factors that have not yet been captured in the picture of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. In order to do so, the thesis sets out to advance our understanding of diplomatic relationship-building. It develops an alternative prism that is devoid of the traditional IR precepts, through which to theorise about diplomatic relationship-building. Secondly, to further open a new avenue to explore and examine the past ten years of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building, the thesis formulates and employs a research methodology consisting of an innovative application of social network analysis in conjunction with crucial qualitative tools in political science.

1.4.1 A theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building

In response to the theoretical imperative, the thesis develops a theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building for understanding the process of diplomatic relationship-building between the EU and China. The theoretical model that is presented in

more detail in chapter three departs from the traditional models anchored in the discipline of International Relations of which the ideational dimensions are undervalued in a purely interest-based model, and the materialist dimensions are absent in a purely value-based model. The theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building is decidedly anchored in diplomatic studies and integrates insights from negotiations studies and the philosophy of shared intentions. Adopting a constitutive logic of theorising, the core of the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building examines how three essential elements – structure, substance and style – constitute the process of diplomatic relationship-building and impact the fundamental underpinning that is EU-China shared intentions in the relationship-building process. This alternative theoretical model is advanced to shed light on the concrete process whereby the essential three elements are transformed to influence shared intentions, and promises to provide nuanced insights to the deeper 'relational' factors determining EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

The theoretical model aims to systemically combine the essential dynamics at play in diplomatic relationship-building in a comprehensive theory. The research distinguishes three essential elements – structure, substance and style to enhance our comprehension of the constitutive process of diplomatic relationship-building and the making of EU-China relations. The first crucial element in diplomatic relationship-building is *Structure*. A structural analysis of the diplomatic relationship-building process enables us to gauge the institutional dynamics of diplomatic relationship-building and enables us to uncover the actors and mechanisms involved in the process. The second element that is vital to understanding the process of diplomatic relationship-building is *Substance*. Understanding substance through the prism of diplomatic studies is about decoding the complexity of the

issues being negotiated in diplomatic fora. Examining the negotiation objectives and issues can help account for the varying degrees of cooperation and contention in diplomatic relationship-building. The third influential element in the process of diplomatic relationship-building is *Style*. The importance of style relates to the fact that the ways in which the EU and China pursue their diplomatic objectives and the patterns, characteristics of cooperation between the EU and China have not been sufficiently explored in the existing literature. An enhanced recognition and examination of the diplomatic style in which negotiations are conducted can shed nuanced light on the sophisticated process of diplomatic relationship-building. Deciphering the three elements of structure, substance and style that constitute relationship-building enable us to better comprehend how the existing EU-China policy tools and framework can be utilised or improved to strengthen the synergies between the EU and China, and has important policy implications regarding how to enhance the mechanisms of policy coordination in order to achieve mutually beneficial 'deliverables' in EU-China diplomacy. In short, the three elements are of particular importance to help us better evaluate, manage and enhance EU-China relations.

The process of diplomatic relationship-building whereby the three essential elements are transformed to become influential can be further analysed by integrating philosophical insights on social reality which provides a key to unlock the deeper human, social and cultural layers undergirding diplomatic relationship-building. The social fabric of diplomatic engagement and the cultural embeddedness of diplomatic interactions have been generally neglected in existing studies. The thesis suggests that integrating insights from the philosophy of social reality into the analysis of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building can bring the deeper relational factors shaping the relationship to the

fore. Shared intentions are particularly useful as a philosophical lens to capture this aspect of diplomatic relationship-building, and should be incorporated into the diplomatic account of EU-China relations. Social reality relies on shared intentions (Searle, 2005; Gilbert, 2007), of which the doing, wanting and believing something together is crucial for collective action. In this light, shared intentions are the glue that holds the EU and China together and animates the process by which the EU and China translate their differing or congruent goals into working together. Without which EU-China relations would be devoid of meaning, both would be building sand castles only to see it fall with the changing circumstances.

The theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building adopts a constitutive logic to theorise the influence of the three essential elements on the shared intentions underpinning diplomatic relationship-building and to capture the dynamic, relational nature of diplomatic relationship-building. Constitutive theorising 'seeks to establish conditions of possibility for objects or events by showing what they are made of and how they are organised. As such, the object or event in question is an 'effect' of the conditions that make it possible, but it does not exist independent of them' (Wendt and Fearon, 1992). The constitutive framework adopted in this study enables us to analyse what constitutes diplomatic relationships and affords a more comprehensive understanding of the process of building relationships.

By way of a short summary, the essence of the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building that this thesis introduces, underscores three essential elements – structure, substance and style – that constitute diplomatic relationship-building, and

influence EU-China shared intentions in the process. This diplomatic studies-anchored model merges the discrete factors that have largely remained in separate silos of the discussions in IR literature, to stimulate new understandings of diplomatic relationship-building. It explicates the way in which institutional actors and mechanisms shape the process of diplomatic decision-making; the negotiations of complex issues entailed in the process and the influence of the distinctively Chinese and European diplomatic styles affecting EU-China dialogue and interactions in diplomatic relationship-building process. In so doing, the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building sheds new light on the factors accounting for the transformation of EU-China relations, and to what extent and in what way these factors determine the process of EU-China relationship-building. In essence, the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building provides a new theory to address the 'relational gap' in diplomatic studies and provides a new theoretical arsenal to better understand EU-China relations.

1.4.2 A qualitative and social network analytical methodology

In relation to the theoretical model, the thesis further advances a research methodology for investigating the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. Detailed in chapter four of the thesis, this research advances an analytical methodology that leverages tools from social network analysis (SNA) and complemented by qualitative methods in political science to examine the process of diplomatic relationship-building. Given its inherent focus on relational dynamics, the application of social network analysis to examining international diplomacy emphasises the dynamic processes of 'material and social relationships' in international relations (Hafner-Bruton, Kahler and Montgomery, 2009). With SNA's 'embedded logic of interdependence', a social network analytical

methodology thereby enables ‘far more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of social processes’ (Maoz, 2012), which would be pertinent to illuminate the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

In particular, the analytical methodology in this research draws insights from social network analysis scholarship’s key conceptual tools of ‘centrality’ and ‘strong and weak ties’ to examine the institutional structure undergirding diplomatic relationship-building. These SNA tools contribute to distil the institutional actors involved in decision-making, and the institutional mechanisms that connect the actors in diplomatic interactions. In addition, the political science method of discourse analysis is adopted to complement social network analysis to further the investigation of the substance element in diplomatic relationship-building – the complex political and technical issues negotiated in diplomatic fora and the dialogue of diplomatic styles in EU-China diplomatic relationship-building process. Discourse analysis ‘focuses on social form and the general effects thereof rather than on specific outcomes’ (Dunn and Neumann, 2016). Moreover, discourse analysis ‘draws our attention to how options and the larger possibilities of action get established. Doing so allows for greater understanding of the process and interactions within the social realm’ (Dunn and Neumann, 2016). Thus, discourse analysis is ideally suited for the examination of diplomatic relationship-building processes. The research seeks to marshal the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building and associated research methodology to trace, capture and evaluate EU-China diplomatic relationship-building through two in-depth case studies.

1.4.3 Two in-depth case studies

The thesis features two in-depth case studies on diplomatic relationship-building of EU-China relations. The empirical investigation lies in two crucial areas of international diplomacy – international agricultural trade and international climate change negotiations. In particular, the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building is explored in two representative and classic areas of EU-China relations: the EU-China negotiations of the landmark bilateral agreement – the *Agreement on Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications* (2009-2019) and the flagship EU-China climate-related bilateral cooperation initiative – the EU-China Emission Trading System Project (2010-2019).

The two case studies have been selected to allow for a cross-case study comparison in terms of the inner-workings of EU-China relationship-building. First, the two case studies serve to test the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building. The two cases allow us to analyse the differing degrees of importance regarding the three essential elements contributing to diplomatic relationship-building. The two empirical studies promise to elucidate the importance of the theory of diplomatic relationship-building in explaining the making of EU-China relations. Second, the selected two cases address the variances of relationship-building in EU-China relations. Across the vast spectrum of EU-China relations, the degree of cooperation and depth of engagement vary depending upon the issue area. Trade has been the anchor of EU-China relations but has been developing amidst varying challenges over the years, while EU-China climate change relations have developed significantly over the past decade. But existing studies have inadequately explained this discrepancy, neither the rationalist, constructivist nor the liberal theories of IR explain why some areas of EU-China relations are better developed than other areas of

the multifaceted relationship. A comparison of two different cases of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building could shed light on as to why and how EU-China relationship-building differs across specific policy issues in the multifaceted relationship, which may provide renewed clarity to the high degree of growing interdependence and expansion of the EU-China relationship. Third, as one the world's most complex and important relationships, the EU-China relationship has far-reaching implications for the changing faces of international diplomacy. The two cases have implications for the broader questions of the EU and China's roles in the rules-based global order centering around the WTO (trade) and the UNFCCC (climate change). The systematic examination of EU-China diplomacy across the policy areas of agricultural trade and climate change provides a lens into the factors and variations concerning the successes and challenges of diplomatic relationship-building between the EU and China.

The two in-depth case studies draw on a rich collection of data encompassing over 100 interviews with practitioners of EU-China relations, from heads of state, high-level diplomats, officials, representatives of research and business communities to technical experts. The semi-structured interviews were conducted from 2015 to 2019 mainly in Europe and China. The extensive data also entails participant observation at EU and Chinese institutional headquarters and in countless diplomatic fora taken place over the past years. Enriching these 'real-time' diplomacy data are newly disclosed official archives regarding EU-China negotiations and cooperation, including *inter alia*, official minutes, summitry statements and written communications. Both empirical cases are studied with a view to address the core research puzzle regarding the enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. The two case studies provide a comparative analysis of the complex

negotiations and diplomatic relationship-building processes between the EU and China. They demonstrate how the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building brings new perspectives on the ebb and flow of EU-China relations, and contributes to a deeper understanding of EU-China shared intentions that by its nature invoke shared vision and elicit intentional collaboration.

1.5 Sketch of the thesis

The remainder of the thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter two provides a critical literature review of EU-China relations and underscores the limitations in the scholarly efforts in examining EU-China relations – the enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. Chapter three develops a theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building to theorise the process of diplomatic relationship-building. Anchored in diplomatic studies, the theoretical model builds on negotiation studies, international relations scholarship, and the philosophy of shared intentions to capture the relational dynamics of diplomatic relationship-building. It contends that the most essential elements in diplomatic relationship-building are the institutional structure, substance of the negotiations and diplomatic styles of the parties concerned, and that these three building blocks constitutively exert profound influence in shaping the fundamental factor of shared intentions in diplomatic relationship-building. Chapter four details the research methodology employed in this research. It assesses the relevance and importance of applying social network analysis to the study of diplomacy and incorporates insights from social network analysis and qualitative methods in political science, to generate a research methodology with the aim to facilitate the operationalisation of the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building in exploring EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

The thesis then uses the theoretical and methodological lenses to analyse the puzzle of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building in two empirical chapters. Chapter five explores the EU-China negotiations of the landmark bilateral agreement – the *Agreement on Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications* (2009-2019). Chapter six examines the flagship EU-China climate-related bilateral cooperation initiative – the EU-China Emission Trading System (ETS) Project (2010-2019). The concluding chapter seven summarises the research findings with detailed comparison of the two case studies and concludes with policy implications and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2 Understanding EU-China Relations

2.1 Introduction

This chapter uncovers the enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building through a critical exploration of the existing scholarly literature on EU-China relations. The first section of the chapter discerns the three main theoretical paradigms in the field of International Relations – realist, constructivist and liberal theories – with special focus on the insights they bring to elucidate EU-China relations. The strengths and fragilities of the three respective theoretical perspectives on EU-China relations will be discussed. Based on this examination, the second section investigates the enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. It examines the nature of the puzzle and the related conundrums that need to be addressed which may offer pathways to solve the enigma in the scholarship on EU-China relations.

2.2 Contextualising EU-China relations

When the European Economic Community and China established full diplomatic relationship in 1975, the then vice-president of the European Commission Sir Christopher Soames stated that both China and the European Economic Community have 'taken a first step towards a closer relationship', and that they 'have much to gain from the closer and more confident relationship which now opens up before us: both of us a people of yesterday, a people of tomorrow'.[1] Little would the pioneers of EU-China relations have

[1] Speech by Sir Christopher Soames, vice-president of the Commission, during a European Parliament debate on China: Strasbourg, 18 June 1975

anticipated the significant development of the relationship evolving into one of the most complex, dynamic and vital international relationships of our time. In the academic literature on Sino-European relations, scholars have primarily used three main theoretical paradigms in the field of International Relations (IR) – the realist, liberal and constructivist traditions – to analyse the dynamics of EU-China relations. While some scholars rely on the IR theories' assumptions explicitly in their work, others have implicitly appropriated IR paradigms in their research. The present study focusses on how the IR models have been utilised by scholars to interpret and assess EU-China relations. To this end, the following section probes the strengths and failings of the existing approaches and their underlying assumptions regarding the making of EU-China relations.

2.2.1 Realist understanding of EU-China relations

Realist theoretical approaches to understanding EU-China relations are manifested most clearly in the literature about the geopolitics of EU-China relations. The relationship is viewed in transactional terms and is merely a *quid pro quo* of fixed material interests. From Thucydides, Machiavelli to contemporary realists, the realist paradigm in international relations theory is generally underpinned by the assumptions that the organising principle of the international system is anarchy, and power politics dominates the world (Waltz, 2010). In this world of anarchy, nations are involved in an endless struggle for survival and they act in their national interest, as such military and economic capabilities are essential to a state's foreign policy (Morgenthau, 1949). Applied to the diplomatic relationship-building of EU-China relations, realist approaches draw attention to the respective material interests and domestic needs of the EU and China, and purport that it is primarily brute material interests that underpin the cooperation between the EU

and China.

In this light, strategic interests and geopolitical concerns have been the fundamental incentive to bring the EU and China together. Building on the realist tradition in general and the balance-of-power theory in particular, this approach to Sino-European relations emphasises the strategic element in Sino-European relations, and that power-balancing considerations play an essential role in fostering linkages between the EU and China (Wai, 2008). Scholars in this tradition argue that both the EU and China use each other as a strategic weight to balance off potential rivals such as the United States. The formal establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the then European Economic Community (EEC), with the accreditation of China's first ambassador to the EEC in 1975 during the Cold War attest to this strategic factor. The lack of any balance to US power in a unipolar world would threaten China's core national interests and Europe's promotion of multilateralism seems ideal in China's search for a multipolar world (Edmonds, 2002).

The geostrategic imperative and a common interest in avoiding a US-dominated unipolar world render the absence of strategic conflict between the EU and China, and is a key factor in the strengthening of EU-China relations (Ross, Tunsjø and Zhang, 2010). It was reflected in the first EU policy paper on China, which stated that 'the development of the EU-China relationship must be a sustained long-term goal' due to China's 'political importance' for Europe. And that there are increasingly 'shared global and regional security interests and shared interests on other global issues, such as scientific and technological development, poverty alleviation, and information society' between the EU and China (European Commission, 1995). Geopolitical consideration generated a breakthrough for the EU-China relationship in 2003 when the EU and China upgraded

their relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and both sides issued policy papers showing the growing importance they attach to each other. China released its first policy paper on the EU, the first ever policy document China had ever released towards a country or a region in China's foreign relations, which indicates the strategic importance of the EU in China's diplomacy. As stated in China's first EU Policy Paper 'there is no fundamental conflict of interest between China and the EU and neither side poses a threat to the other', China attaches importance to 'the role and influence of the EU in regional and international affairs'.[2]

Realist perspectives on EU-China relations have often been discussed in relation to the changing power structure of the world order. Yahuda argued that China's relations with the EU is derivative of broader strategic forces in the international system and considered the EU-China relationship of 'secondary nature' during the bipolar Cold War period (Yahuda, 1995). Scholars stress the significance of EU-China relations in the international system (Casarini, 2009; Scott, 2014), suggesting the emergence of a 'strategic axis' that could shape international politics in the 21st century (Shambaugh *et al.* 2008; Kerr and Liu, 2007). Realist approaches see the diplomacy forged between China and the EU as a story of 'two powers re-emerging', China is re-emerging through 'internal economic and social transformation', and the EU through 'integration and intensive policy co-ordination' (Chen and Armstrong, 2010).

Strong economic interests also drive the development of the relationship and EU-China economic ties have become the anchor of the multifaceted relationship. Economic interests

[2] *China's EU policy paper*, October 2003, available at: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/ceupp_665916/t27708.shtml

became the main driving force underpinning the convergence between the EU and China when the 'strategic imperative faded' during the end of the Cold War (Möller, 2002). The primacy of a 'new economic imperative' from the 1980s onwards inspired a broadening of EU-China relations, especially the increasing economic and technological cooperation (Möller, 2002). In particular, the idea of 'economic security' has been accounted for the 'widespread engagement' across economic, political and security issues between the EU and China since the mid-1990s (Casarini, 2009). The EU believed that engaging with China would eventually lead China to transform towards an open society with a cooperative foreign policy which would be beneficial for the EU's economic security and socio-economic welfare. This economic security discourse underpinned the EU's intention to support China's development and modernisation, and especially the enhancement of economic and technological relations between the EU and China (Casarini, 2009).

Indeed, the complementarity of economic interests between the EU and China has been of paramount importance in the development of EU-China relations. With the ultimate aim of seeking better market access for European goods and services in China (Commission of European Communities, 1995), the EU supported China's early entry in the WTO in line with EU interests of promoting China's economic and trade reforms, and to facilitate China's integration into the multilateral trading system. In 2001, China's entry into the WTO as its 143rd member created momentum for the strengthening of EU-China relations. China is now the EU's second-biggest trading partner behind the United States while the EU is China's biggest trading partner.

Realist lenses have also been utilised to explain the increasing economic interdependence between the EU and China. China's economic growth has propelled China to become the

world's second largest economy. The EU views the growing economic power of China occupying 'a position of geo-strategic importance in the Asian continent as well as in the Pacific sphere. At a global level, China maintains an essential role within the G20'.[3] The underlying EU motivation in strengthening trade and economic ties with China lies in the EU's attempt to increase its role as a global actor through dialogue and cooperation. Both sides strengthened the economic dimension of the relationship with the establishment of the Economic and Sectoral Dialogue in 2010. The EU is the world's largest single market area, from China's perspective building good relations with Europe is seen as a 'necessary prerequisite' for China's economic development, as Europe's advanced economy, technology and expertise provide important opportunities and markets for China. This argument which is pragmatic and realistic is embedded in the place of Europe in China's foreign policy thinking (Kissinger, 2012). Indeed, economic factors continue to be one of the most important factors in fostering EU-China synergies and are reflected in the EU-China efforts to negotiate trade agreements. The EU and China have been negotiating a bilateral trade agreement since 2013 and an eventual free trade agreement is envisaged in the future (European Commission, 2013).

The realist-based assessment of EU-China relations does not always view the relationship *en rose*. Some scholars highlight the limited shared interests between two very different actors such as the EU and China, and the obstacles, such as a growing divergence on global issues, in developing a 'true partnership' between the EU and China. Some believe that the EU and China continue to be 'distant neighbours' (Kapur, 1990; Vogt, 2012), signaling the presence of misunderstanding and growing divergences between the two

[3] European Union, Factsheet EU-China summit, Brussels, 6 October 2010, available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/116848.pdf

sides, and that competition and potential confrontation dominate the strategic interaction between the EU and China. Others point to the asymmetries and symmetries in EU-China relations (Zhou, 2004) and purport that the fluctuating relationship is more likely to result in conflict rather than concord (Harst and Swieringa, 2012). They purport that, to date, China and the EU have enjoyed 'far more success and progressive development on the front of trade and investments than in sensitive areas regarding security cooperation' (Harst and Halbertsma, 2017).

Whilst realist understanding of EU-China relations tells us a relationship-building story in terms of 'the rise and fall of powers' in a world of anarchy, realist thinking does not convincingly explain the vast development of EU-China relations that have become increasingly multifaceted and robust in a wide range of crucial issues. Realist insights have often reduced the complex relationship to the dichotomy of 'strong economics, weak politics' (Harst and Halbertsma, 2017), and have not provided convincing reasons to explain such a dichotomy. The realist explanations of EU-China relations do not sufficiently explain the complexity of EU-China interactions. At the core, they constitute a relatively narrow materialist perspective on strategic incentives and interests, which neglects the influence of other more intangible factors and diplomatic symbolism in international relations. The realist argument that only interests and material factors of military and economic nature are the driving force in EU-China relations does not present a full picture of the multifaceted EU-China relationship.

2.2.2 Constructivist understanding of EU-China relations

In contrast to the realist accounts of EU-China relations is the constructivist perspective on

EU-China relations, which emphasises the non-material factors in the forging of diplomatic relations. ‘Anarchy is what states make of it’ represents constructivists’ most penetrating critique of the realist interpretation of international relations (Wendt, 1992). Constructivists highlight the social as opposed to the material in international affairs and bring in the ideational factors such as ‘state identities’, ‘world views’ and even ‘deep emotions’ into the heart of the picture of international politics (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993). In Ruggie’s words, constructivism ‘rests on a deeper and broader ontology, thereby providing a richer understanding of some phenomena and shedding light on other aspects of international life, quite literally, do not exist within the neo-utilitarian rendering of the world polity’ (Ruggie, 1998). Undergirding the constructivist theory of international relations is a focus on the ‘social context in which international relations occur’, and an ideational emphasise on the issues of identity and belief, and the social factors influencing a state’s behavior (Wendt, 1999). In essence, constructivist explanations of international relations seek to explain the ‘socially constructed’ factors shaping relationship-building. For example, instead of assuming the interests driving a state’s foreign policy, constructivists explore how those interests are ‘constructed through a process of interaction with broader environments defined by social norms and social discourses’ (Adler, 2002, p.95; Checkel, 2008, p. 72). Moreover, in the constructivist account of international relations, the perception of friends and enemies are of the key determinants of a state’s behavior, and that the varying identities of the states underpin the states’ external relations. In this logic, constructivists examine how states perceive each other in the international system and how such perceptions vary, change and influence the process of decision-making and the way states pursue their diplomatic objectives (Jervis, 1976).

Applying the constructivist tradition to the diplomacy between the EU and China,

constructivists argue that EU-China relations defined purely in materialistic terms is incomplete, and one should take into account other non-materialistic factors, such as the values that constitute and shape China and the EU's foreign policies. In particular, these constructivist-led analyses suggest that the identities of the EU and China exert influence in shaping the bilateral relationship. Identity is crucial for understanding international behavior and cooperation (Hopf, 2002). Constructivist scholars purport that Europe is, like China, a 'civilizational polity', and one source of Europe's identity 'lies in its relations with other international actors' (Checkel and Katzenstein, 2009). The interaction with China makes Europeans increasingly reflect on their own future and the sets of values Europe should stand for. As such, China's rise is 'a catalyst of European integration' (Checkel and Katzenstein, 2009). This resonates with the argument regarding the 'relational identity' factor in the fluidity of EU-China relations, that EU-China relations 'evolve in tandem with the growth and changing nature of each other' (Jørgensen and Wong, 2016; Wong, 2013). Similarly, scholars underscore the 'symbolic meanings' behind the expansion of the EU-China relationship since 2003, arguing that 'the expansion of ties between the EU and China' legitimises 'both sides in their domestic and international politics because the new relations reaffirm each side's image of itself and the Other' (Callahan, 2007). The EU-China strategic partnership 'aids the EU's project of crafting the image of Europe as a 'civilian power' and helps China to 'construct a view of China as a non-hegemonic superpower' (Callahan, 2007).

Constructivist narratives of EU-China relationship-building also emphasise the importance of historical influences on contemporary EU-China relations (Wong, 2013). For example, some recurring factors that have continued to 'shape relations between Europeans and

Chinese down to the present may be seen to have operated from the outset', these factors include the 'tyranny of distance' and 'the primacy of trade' (Yahuda, 2008), and EU-China encounters have overcome the geographical distance while trade is the 'main conduit for and substance of' the relationship (Yahuda, 2008). Scholarly approaches following this tradition adopt a *longue durée* perspective in viewing the evolution of EU-China relations.[4] The remarkable development of EU-China relations is embedded in the historical ebb and flow of the encounter between China and Europe which can be traced back to centuries ago. EU-China relations have been 'shaped by past historical encounters' which is 'reflected in their complex views of each other that influence the potential for the development of a further comprehensive relationship' (Rees, 2009).

In this light, scholars purport that appreciating the mutual perceptions of the EU and China is key to understanding the development of the EU-China relationship (Wong, 2013). The frequent swings between cooperation and conflict lie in the ever-changing identities of the EU and China in the evolving international order (Wong, 2013). In particular, a growing body of literature has focused on external perceptions of the EU as a diplomatic actor to shed light on the EU's international presence in world politics (Lucarelli, 2013). These constructivist driven scholars argue that the EU's international role is influenced by not only its own global aspirations but also the strategic visions of 'others' on the EU. The focus of the external perceptions of the EU can contribute to our understanding of the conditions in order for the EU's international policies to be effective (Elgström and Smith, 2006; Lucarelli and Fioramonti 2010). A few efforts have been made to capture Chinese views of the EU as a 'social power' (Song, 2010) or a 'unique international actor' (Zhu,

4 The *longue durée* perspective was pioneered by the French Annales School, see for example Fernand Braudel and Immanuel Wallerstein, 'History and the Social Sciences: The Longue Durée' in Review (Fernand Braudel Center), Vol. 32, No. 2, Commemorating the longue durée (2009), pp. 171-203.

2010). It is believed that understanding China's perceptions of the EU could contribute to strengthening the EU's policy towards China and enable both sides to adjust policies towards each other (Shambaugh, Sandschneider and Zhou, 2007).

In a similar vein, constructivist-oriented analyses highlight the role of identity in shaping foreign policy. Constructivist perspectives on the role of the EU in the world is not primarily concerned with 'what it does or what it says, but what it is' (Manners, 2002). Manners conceive of the EU as a 'normative power', an international actor whose foreign policy is driven by the values that it defends and promotes (Manners, 2002). Through these lenses, the EU-China relationship is measured upon 'the ideational impact of the EU's international identity and role' (Manners, 2002, p.238; Mattlin, 2010). But as the values the EU aspires to promote in its external relations with China is not shared completely between the two sides, and since the EU does not possess much leverage over China either, there are limitations in the EU's values-based approach to China (Mattlin, 2010). In a similar fashion, it is argued that as the EU embodies certain values that have been enshrined in the treaties which have founded the European Union, the EU's relations with China reflect the EU's 'search for identity within the world arena and also projecting formally and informally the values on which the EU is taken to be founded', there is an inherent 'identity logic' underlying the EU's external relations, and the EU's diplomacy with China 'expresses the identity logic of the EU's external policies' (Smith and Xie, 2010).

According to constructivists, the development of EU-China relations reflects not only the shifting priorities, but also attests to the importance of values, building trust and fostering

understanding between the EU and China (Scott, 2014). Since the first EU-China Summit in 1998, the overarching annual EU-China summit has become the foremost institutionalised interaction in fostering EU-China contact, setting the overall direction for EU-China development. The dialogues and bilateral cooperation between the EU and China now take place under a three pillar structure of the EU-China Strategic Partnership: the High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue, the High-Level Strategic Dialogue, and the High-Level People-to-People Dialogue. The three high-level dialogues were established respectively in 2008, 2010 and 2012, and were built to facilitate exchange and communication between the EU and China. The institutionalisation of the relationship was based on institutionalised political exchanges and gradually came to include softer issues, such as cultural exchanges and people-to-people dialogue. The establishment of the EU-China High level People-to-People Dialogue in 2012 was envisaged to complement the political and economic aspects of EU-China relations with the strengthening of the cultural aspect of the relationship.

Moreover, constructivists attribute the broadening of EU-China cooperation to the importance and convergence of similar values between the EU and China on many issue areas. One crucial area of discussion related to this is the cooperation between the EU and China on environment and climate change. As the 2018 *EU-China Leaders' Statement on Climate Change and Clean Energy* purports, it is the value of sustainable development that has motivated China and the EU to jointly tackle climate change.[5] Yet, in a constructivist vein it is also values, in conflict with one another, that bring challenges to advancing EU-China relations. The EU and China 'remain divided over core political values' that

[5] Full statement available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/news/20180713_statement_en.pdf

impede a closer EU-China alignment (Maher, 2016). Frictions between the EU and China are underpinned by the differences in norms and interpretations of values (Pan, 2012), which render the EU-China relationship building more of a process of 'repairing' a relationship, in lieu of 'driving forward' a relationship (Chen and Armstrong, 2010). Some even argue that the EU and China remain mismatched partners in an asymmetric strategic partnership 'devoid of strategic content' (Godement and Vasselier, 2017).

In contrast to material forces, constructivist analyses of EU-China relations ascribe importance to the ideational motivation of EU-China convergence and divergence. The role of ideational factors takes center stage in the constructivist enterprise, as 'ideas matter' and 'the most important ideational factors are widely shared or 'intersubjective' beliefs' (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001). Constructivist approaches challenge realists' understanding of EU-China relations in emphasising the dynamics of the social, the values and changing identities of the EU and China. By virtue of which, constructivists accounts are undergirded by a broader ontology and may offer a relatively broader perspective on the cooperation between the EU and China. However, constructivist-oriented analysis of EU-China relations essentially provides a different angle to investigate many of the same issues addressed by hard-core realism, the old questions underpinning realist undertakings of EU-China relations remain problematic and may be even more acute. Furthermore, constructivist renderings of EU-China relations have not been able to fully explain the variation between ideational factors and their effect on diplomatic interactions. In short, constructivists perspectives on EU-China relations do not convincingly elucidate the forces undermining or enhancing the diplomatic interactions between the EU and China.

2.2.3 Liberal understanding of EU-China relations

The third main theoretical approach to understanding EU-China relations in the scholarly literature is the liberal approach. Liberal thought has its roots in the philosophical canon of the Enlightenment especially in Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* which outlined the three conditions of perpetual peace for international and domestic politics. Kant argues that 'Perpetual Peace will be guaranteed by the ever-widening acceptance of three 'definitive articles of peace', including 'peaceful nations must be republics with economies aimed at improving citizens' well-being, and that the expansion of this 'pacific union' among these peace nations form international peace' (Kant, 1795; Doyle, 1983). In essence, liberal theorists believe cooperation that is 'motivated by a shared normative commitment to the rule of law, rather than competition driven by self-interest' is 'the animating force that underlies world affairs' (Suri, 2013). Few liberal proponents rival the influence of Doyle who developed the 'democratic peace theory' purporting that democracies do not wage war against each other (Doyle, 1983, 2011). The powerful statement has been described as coming 'close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations' (Levy, 1988). Liberal adherents maintain that economic interdependence among states is vital for a peaceful international system. Complex interdependence among states takes place in multiple channels but especially through international institutions and that the more participation creates better chances of cooperation (Keohane and Nye, 2012).

Liberal approaches to investigating EU-China relations constitute a less cohesive and extensive body of the existing literature. Only a few scholarly works have deliberately utilised the approach to interpret EU-China relations. Drawing insights from liberal institutionalism, the investigations emphasise the role of institutional factors to account for the continuity of cooperation between the EU and China. For example, scholars purport

that the dialogue architecture of the EU-China relationship 'provides a stable and continuous framework underpinning China-EU relations' (Christiansen, 2016), key to the observation from a liberal-institutional perspective is that these institutionalised meetings 'oblige both sides to meet one another regularly and create an administrative routine around these meetings, involving agenda setting, chairing arrangements, review mechanisms, and other procedural elements that normalise and regularise bilateral relations', as such liberal approaches seek to illuminate the 'routinisation of administrative interaction' and 'path for socialisation' that come with the high institutionalisation of the EU-China relationship (Christiansen, 2016) .

In a similar vein, liberal IR theory-based studies have suggested that the essence of EU-China relations is 'to a large degree determined by a high degree of institutionalisation which took shape and was adapted over many years' (Algieri, 2002). Indeed, underpinning the significant development of EU-China diplomatic relations is an increasingly strengthened institutionalisation of bilateral interactions. One distinctive and significant element of the institutionalised EU-China relationship is the 'less visible, but flourishing area of exchanges on sectoral policies and technical issues or, as they are known, 'sectoral dialogues' between China and the EU'.[6] As of 2019, there are over 60 sectoral dialogues between the EU and China. These sectoral dialogues are intended to address areas of common interests, exchange knowledge and provide a solid foundation for EU-China relations. They take place from technical level to ministerial level, and involve a range of participants including, *inter alia*, diplomats, government officials, and stakeholders from the business, research and civil society communities.

[6] European Commission, EU-China relations: an overview of sectoral dialogues between China and the European Commission, available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/fd/200/200602/2006022201en.pdf

Furthermore, liberals believe in ‘commercial’ or ‘capitalist’ peace in that trade growth increases economic efficiency and can discourage conflict between states (Gartzke, 2007). This commercial liberal tradition of the pacifying effects of markets originated as the ‘doux commerce’ thought in the eighteenth century in which philosophers and economists argued that commerce could civilise people and states in economic exchanges are more reasonable (Movsesian, 2018). Exponents of this tradition maintain that ‘liberalism produces special material incentives for cooperation because among fellow liberals economic interdependence should not be subject to security-motivated restrictions and, consequently, tends to be more varied, less dependent on single issue and less subject to single conflicts’ (Doyle, 2008). It is believed that these liberal ideas of change through trade have informed the EU’s engagement policy towards China in an increasingly interdependent world (Casarini, 2009). The European Commission launched the policy of ‘constructive engagement’ in its first policy paper devoted to its relations with China (European Commission, 1995). Some analysts have gone further to describe the EU’s China strategy as ‘unconditional engagement’ which is based on ‘the belief that China, under the influence of European engagement, will liberalise its economy and improve the rule of law’ (Fox and Godement, 2009). In tune with liberal perspectives on economic integration and the importance of international institutions, the EU’s strong economic ties with China are perceived as instrumental for supporting the development of China’s modernisation (Casarini, 2009). Some have pointed to the impact of the EU institutions on the development of the relationship between two ‘very different actors’, highlighting how EU policy towards China has evolved from ‘a focus on assisting China’s development and reform process to a focus on dealing with the challenges posed by the rise of China’

(Cameron, 2009).

Liberalism ‘contributes to the understanding of foreign policy by highlighting how political institutions can have direct effects on foreign relations’ (Doyle, 2008). The liberal theoretical approach to EU-China relations with its emphasis on the institutional development of EU-China relations provides a logical reasoning for the increasing institutionalised interactions between the EU and China. It highlights the fact that the institutionalisation of EU-China relations contributes to strengthening mutual understanding between both sides and could contribute positively to fostering EU-China relations. However, these liberal approaches are too simple a theoretical model to explain the causes and consequences of the highly complex and interdependent relations between the EU and China. They do not fully dispel the increasingly complex character of decision-making in EU-China relations and have failed to investigate the weaknesses or effectiveness of these institutional settings. In short, liberal approaches only partially unravel the institutional labyrinth of EU-China relations.

2.3 The enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building

‘What makes the world hang together?’ one of the most influential International Relations scholars John Ruggie asked at the turn of the twenty first century. An analogous question can similarly be applied to the development of EU-China relations: ‘what makes the EU and China hang together?’ The explanations in the existing scholarly literature for the EU and China’s growing relationship are characterised by a dichotomous distinction between material and ideational factors. Realist, constructivist and liberal theories in the field of International Relations have been the dominant compasses guiding scholarly efforts to

comprehend EU-China relations and have provided us with a cacophony of answers. Most analyses have not offered convincing explanations of the convergences and divergences between the EU and China and the pendulum swing of cooperation and contention in EU-China relations. The arguable consensus in the observation is that the making of EU-China relations is underpinned at least as much in the realm of interests as in the domain of values.

Yet despite the valuable insights about EU-China relations yielded by IR theoretical models, many of the conclusions about EU-China relations have been deduced from the assumptions of 'anarchy' 'ideas' or 'institutions', bounded by the ontological constraints of IR theories. The development of a complex relationship such as the one between the EU and China is a mélange of various forces and factors, like 'any bilateral interaction in world affairs is conditioned by a combination of indigenous and exogenous variables' (Robinson and Shambaugh, 1994). But the existing studies tend to emphasise a discrete factor shaping EU-China relations, and have not fully explored the variances nor the interrelation of the myriad factors fostering the ebb and flow of Sino-European diplomacy. Nor has there been sufficient explanation of how the EU and China translate their respective diplomatic objectives, shared interests or divergent values into the EU and China working together. The existing studies have brushed the surface of the making of the relationship, but rarely have they captured or indeed theorised about the dynamics of the byzantine relationship-building process between the two complex regions. They are primarily interested in interpreting foreign policy outcomes, less so on how foreign policy outcomes are shaped by processes and patterns of engagement and action. Furthermore, they have failed to provide adequate explanation of the complexity and intensity of EU-China relationship-building, and to unearth the competitive and cooperative nature of

EU-China relations. The dearth of understanding of the diplomatic relationship-building process between the EU and China constitutes an enigma entailing two conundrums in need to be addressed.

The first conundrum is related to the 'level of analysis' issue. IR theories infused research on EU-China relations has so far focused attention on taking the EU and China as *homogenous unitary entities.* The EU and China as sole homogenous actors are so entrenched as frames of reference that existing studies typically are more concerned with the broader international systemic-level questions of how to address the power shifts in international affairs. The process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building remains largely opaque. The limitations in this systemic-level oriented approach to international relations has been summarised by Singer that 'by eschewing any empirical concern with the domestic and internal variations within the separate nations, the system-oriented approach tends to produce a sort of 'black box' or 'billiard bill' concept of the national actors. By discounting – denying the difference among nations, or by positing the near-impossibility of observing many of these differences at work within them, one concludes with a highly homogenized image of our nations in the international system' (Singer, 1961). Since 'the constitutive properties' of the EU and China as international actors are different, and their understandings of international order are different, this level of analysis provides limited explanations to comprehend EU-China relations (Kerr, 2007). Much could be gained from exploring the myriad levels of interactions within EU-China relations, in other words the inner-workings of EU-China relations would be essential to unpack if we were to understand the factors conditioning the interactions between the EU and China.

The second conundrum underpinning the enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building is that existing studies have not sufficiently responded to the changing nature of EU-China diplomacy. They have failed to articulate and examine convincingly the dynamics and direction of the relationship as to whether the EU and China are increasingly drifting apart or growing closer. The changing nature of EU-China relations is most manifest in the increasingly institutionalised framework that underpins the multi-actor and multidimensional relationship between the EU and China, which is the bedrock of EU-China dialogue and cooperation. The growing institutionalisation of EU-China relations entails a growing number of actors who influence EU-China diplomacy and multiple diplomatic channels whereby European and Chinese actors coordinate policies and engage with each other. Yet current studies do not provide satisfactory explanations to this increasing multiplicity of actors and mechanisms in EU-China relations. There is little in-depth analysis of the plethora of institutional actors involved in EU-China relationship-building. The web of exchanges operating at multiple echelons from the highest levels of summitry to various mid-level and low-level ties in EU-China relations has been understudied. There is an overemphasis on government-to-government ties, overlooking the fact that both China and the EU's diplomacies are 'increasingly pluralistic' (Wu, 2007), and EU-China relations are characterised by an increasing involvement of a variety of stakeholders besides government institutions. EU-China engagements entail both track one and track two diplomacies, with formal EU-China interactions complemented by other non-governmental modalities of engagement influencing policy-making.

Increasing complexity and dramatic changes in EU-China relations are equally reflected in

the kaleidoscopic range of issues negotiated in EU-China diplomatic interactions. The myriad issue areas that EU-China relations cover and the increasing actors and mechanisms are intertwined, in as much as the growing number of issues necessitate increasing actors to become more and more germane to the making of EU-China relations. Foreign policy decision-making process has been influenced by the 'proliferation of expert-based bureaucracies in the decision-making process and the increased reliance by decision-makers on information provided by specialised bureaucracies' (Lampton, 2001). Furthermore, across the vast spectrum of EU-China relations, the degree of cooperation and depth of engagement vary depending upon the issue area. Trade has been the anchor of EU-China relations but has developed amidst varying challenges over the past decade, while EU-China climate change relations have developed significantly over the past decade. But existing studies have inadequately explained this discrepancy, neither the rationalist, constructivist nor the liberal theories of IR explain why some spheres of EU-China relations are better developed than other areas of the relationship. The existing literature suffers from the paucity of an explanation as to why and how EU-China relationship-building differs across specific policy issues, which may provide renewed clarity to the high degree of growing interdependence and expansion of the EU-China relationship.

There is much fewer discussions of the characteristics of the EU and China's diplomacies manifest in the relationship-building processes. While scholars acknowledge the differences between the Chinese approach to diplomacy and European-style ideas of diplomacy (Kissinger, 2012), less is known about how they affect EU-China relations. Studies on the characteristics featuring European and Chinese diplomacies, and the way in

which the EU and China pursue their objectives in diplomatic negotiations are few and far between. A few scholarly works have alluded to the importance of understanding the characteristics of Chinese diplomacy and EU diplomacy in influencing EU-China relations. For example, scholars indicate that the way the EU-China relations have been advanced is due to the 'patterns of interaction and communication in EU-China cooperation process'. An 'optimistic and cooperative attitude' between the EU and China that derives from the 'familiarity and long-standing engagement' between the two sides is one of the important features marking the relationship (Vichitsoratsatra, 2009). The change in EU-China relations is related to the 'modalities of interaction between China and the EU' (Gaenssmantel, 2010). However thus far there has been no systemic examination of EU-style diplomacy and Chinese-style diplomacy, nor the similarities and differences in patterns of EU-China engagement.

The enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building necessitates an alternative theoretical model to address the abovementioned conundrums that have not been satisfactorily dealt with by existing IR theories. The enigma speaks to the imperative that rather than explaining international events' evolution 'from the outside', scholars should focus on the understanding 'from the inside' of the perspectives of the actors making the decisions, so as to construct the milieu in which international relations unfold (Hollis and Smith, 1991). Deciphering the diplomatic relationship-building process in EU-China relations – explaining and assessing the actors, mechanisms and issues that contribute to the formation of EU-China relations – promises to address this problematic engima. This research suggests that a theoretical model from a vintage point of diplomatic studies can rectify the current weaknesses in the scholarly literature on EU-China relations. A

diplomatic studies perspective offers a novel approach that is emancipated from the shadows of international relations paradigms, and promises to facilitate a more dynamic discussion of the EU-China relationship-building process for two reasons. First, diplomatic studies perspectives focus on the very issue of diplomatic engagement and can better illuminate the process of relations-making (Bjola 2013). Essentially a relational approach, a diplomatic studies anchored theoretical analysis of EU-China relations could overcome the problem that the scholarly analysis of 'the development of Sino-EU relations suffer from a lack of coherent theoretical underpinning' (Bersick, 2015, p. 619) and that 'even fewer works attempts to thoroughly test theoretical approaches when analysing overall problems and challenges in the relations' (Bersick, 2015, p. 620). A systemic research on the dynamics of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building from a diplomatic studies perspective could offer a more nuanced understanding of the plethora of actors involved in the making of the relationship, and further reveal the highly nuanced relations among them. Traditional IR theoretical perspectives are primarily interested in interpreting foreign policy outcomes, they have been infused by the foreign policy analysis (FPA) vintage point, which focuses on policies and objectives, less on the process by which theses policies and goals have been achieved and shaped by patterns of engagement and action. An investigation from a diplomatic studies perspective can provide a different angle for a more comprehensive understanding of the interactions between the EU and China, and can potentially provide rich descriptions of diplomatic practices and processes. In essence, a diplomatic studies anchored approach merges the discrete factors that have largely remained in separate silos of the discussions in IR literature which could stimulate new understandings of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

Second, addressing the enigma from a diplomatic studies perspective provides a pathway to address the level of analysis conundrum that clouds traditional IR approaches. A diplomatic studies approach not only takes the EU and China as whole unitary entities, but also unpacks and delves deeper into the manifold of institutions and mechanisms contributing to EU-China relations. Such an approach to EU-China relations will help us identify the important actors, the multi-level arrangements and the wide array of issues negotiated in EU-China relations. In so doing, it unravels the 'thick' processes and dynamics of the EU-China relationship, and provides deeper insights into the making of the relationship between the EU and China. Diplomatic studies perspective promises new lenses through which EU-China relations can be better understood and explained beyond traditional theories of IR. Yet so far there is no such detailed analysis of EU-China relations anchored in diplomatic studies.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter examined the differing interpretations of EU-China dynamics in the existing scholarly literature. Embedded in the assumptions of IR theories, these studies have failed to sufficiently explain the enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. Existing studies on the relationship between the EU and China usually reduce the complexity of the multi-actor, multi-faceted and multi-dimensional relationship-building to a set of interests, values or institutional arrangements. This research aims to rectify this weakness. It stands to reason that to illuminate the enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building, one must first understand the nature of the beast – diplomatic relationship-building *per se*. The next chapter sets out to decipher diplomatic relationship-building and develops a theoretical model to unravel key questions concerning EU-China relations. Through the

prism of diplomatic analysis, the study aims to offer a novel way of theorising diplomatic relationship-building and to open the 'black box' of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building, contributing to providing more clarity and refining our comprehension of EU-China relations.

Chapter 3 Theorising Diplomatic Relationship-Building

3.1 Introduction

This chapter develops a theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building to systematically examine the understudied and undertheorised process of diplomatic relationship-building in general, and to ameliorate our understanding of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building in particular. Anchored in diplomatic studies, this chapter proceeds as follows. The next section explores the existing schools of thought on diplomatic relationship-building and underlines that the existing literature has not satisfactorily captured the essence of diplomatic relationship-building. It begins by unpacking the theoretical and practical milieu of diplomatic relationship-building, before proceeding to examine the traditional divide between the interest-based and value-based theoretical models in the existing scholarly literature. It will explore and elucidate the underlying assumptions of diplomatic relationship-building in the two main schools of thought and seek to uncover a more nuanced understanding of diplomatic relationship-building. The section subsequently endeavours to transcend these debates by revealing the 'relational gap' in theorising diplomatic relationship-building. The third section seeks to further unveil and theorise diplomatic relationship-building by incorporating the philosophical lens of social reality to the investigation of diplomatic relationship-building, it focuses on the key concept of shared intentions to shed light on diplomatic relationship-building. The forth section proposes three key elements that are vital to distil the essence of diplomatic relationship-building. The section first explains why it is important to theorise diplomatic relationship-building in the framework of

constitutive theorising, and then proceeds to distil three essential elements – structure, substance and style – to assess the dynamism in the process of diplomatic relationship-building. In relation to the three elements, the fifth section derives three propositions forming the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building to capture the influence of the three constitutive elements in the process of diplomatic relationship-building between the EU and China.

3.2 Deciphering diplomatic relationship-building

Philosopher William James once said 'whenever two people meet, there are really six people present. There is each man as he sees himself, each man as the other person sees him, and each man as he really is'. This complexity and intensity of dialogue may be particularly true in diplomacy. As a form of institutionalised communication, diplomacy in international fora is charged with manifold interests, values, meaning and symbolism. Yet, exactly how diplomatic relationship-building takes place remains an enigma. As Allison and Zelikow purported both diplomat and scholar would be inevitably humbled, as 'the essence of ultimate decision remains impenetrable to the observer – often, indeed, to the decider himself… There will always be the dark and tangled stretches in the decision-making process – mysterious even to those who may be most intimately involved' (Allison and Zelikow, 1999; Kennedy, 1963).

The subject of diplomatic relationship-building is far too often tossed around, yet far too less articulated and understood. At its core, diplomacy is about building and managing relations of enmity and friendship in world politics (Bjola, 2013, p.8). The conduct of diplomacy and the rules underpinning the current diplomatic system were established at

the 1815 Congress of Vienna and codified in the 1961Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Diplomacy has been conceptualised as 'the peaceful conduct of relations' (Hamilton and Langhorne, 1995; Jönsson, 2012) or the 'mediation between estranged individuals, groups or entities', and the 'mediation of estrangement on pre-, intra- and inter-state levels' is the basis of the diplomatic system (Der Derian, 1987). The origins and transformations of diplomacy are related to 'conditions of alienation', and diplomacy functions as the mediation between estranged entities (Der Derian, 1987).

The idea of diplomatic relationship-building has been referred to implicitly in the classic conceptualisations of diplomacy. For example, diplomacy has been construed as the 'mediation of universalism and particularism', the balance of 'universalism and particularism manifests itself in the interrelation between a common diplomatic culture and diverse cultural conditioning of diplomats from different parts of the world', moreover, this universalism-particularism of diplomacy has been reflected in the 'coexistence of common and conflicting interests in negotiations', in that diplomatic actors negotiate to 'further the interests of their particular polities', but also identify 'the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the avoidance of war as common interests' (Jönsson and Hall, 2005). Some scholars conceptualise diplomatic processes as 'the management of international relations by negotiation; the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys; the business or art of the diplomatist' (Nicolson. 1963; Zartman, 2016). While more commonly, diplomatic engagement has been treated as 'a process through which the objectives of policies directed towards the management of relations with an actor's international environment are translated into outcomes through the employment of a range of institutionalised techniques and strategies mediated through a set of established structures, rules and norms' (Hocking, 2016, p.67). Albeit in different

contexts, these understandings of diplomacy do not present a convincing theory of diplomatic relationship-building nor do they explain how the process of diplomatic relationship-building is developed.

As a social phenomenon, diplomacy 'cannot be understood without reference to the social surroundings from which it grows and of which it is a part' (Reus-Smit, 1999; Neumann, 2002). The milieu in which diplomatic relationship-building is embedded is in constant motion, marked by an increasing multiplication of the actors participating in the diplomatic process and the competing mechanisms of interaction and communication channels that underpin manifold of diplomatic practices. Global phenomena from 'international law to world order, through humanitarianism, global hierarchies, and public power, are made possible by evolving forms of diplomacy' (Sending, Pouliot and Neumann, 2015). The 'manifold practices and social relationships that diplomacy weave' now 'takes place among multiple sites of authority, power and influence' (Cooper, Heine and Thakur, 2013; Sending, *et al*., 2011, p.529).

The multiplication of actors is intertwined with the multiplication of issue areas which are the key features that characterise today's global diplomacy. Diplomacy no longer deals with matters of war and peace, and is no longer reserved for solving the issues of the foreign services of states. The scope of diplomacy 'encompasses the whole range of issues generated by modern societies. These include the environment, trade, investment, foreign aid, cultural relations, security issues, arms control, human rights, aviation, natural resources, health, international criminal activity, illegal immigration, and many others' (Holsti, 2004). As such the ministries of foreign affairs have increasing competition from other ministries, such as ministries of finance, commerce or environment, who have access

to specialised knowledge to deal with the complexity of cross-border issues. The interactions between the actors involved are denser with an expanding diplomatic agenda in line with the changing circumstances. Moreover, the role of ministries of foreign affairs in setting and implementing policy is increasingly influenced by international organisations, as 'few issues today lie completely outside the purview of one international organisation or another' (Cooper, Heine and Thakur, 2013, p.10). Diplomacy is no longer confined to inter-state relations, it also involves the social, economic, cultural and political relations among networks of political actors in formal and informal domestic and systemic environments' (Lee and Hocking 2010). The traditional perception of a 'top-down' diplomatic practice is increasingly complemented by lower-level contacts including local practices and discourses (Neumann, 2012).

Diplomacy is constantly shaped by and adapting to the complex contemporary changes in the world. Changes in diplomacy is characterised by the multiplication of actors, the growing interconnectedness among the actors, and the facilitation of communication among the actors with means of rapid technological development and communication (Holsti, 2004). The growth in 'the number of participants taking part in the negotiations, the number of issues that are now the subject of international negotiations, the diversity of negotiating styles of officials coming from vastly different political cultures and levels of development, and the technical complexity of the subject matters have combined to make the process of negotiation more elaborate, highly technical, and more protracted' (Cooper, Heine and Thakur, 2013, p.17).

To capture and comprehend the changing faces of international diplomacy, two schools of thought have provided particularly important insights that bear on the process of

diplomatic relationship-building. These two traditions of thought in international relations – the interest-based and value-based schools of thought – dominate the myriad of scholarly explanations that are built upon a dichotomy of interests and values, with one prioritising interest over value and vice versa. The interest-based school of thought purporting that diplomatic relations are formed on a strong basis of interests are mainly the school of rationalists. Rationalists argue that diplomatic relationship-building is predominantly interest-based and diplomatic processes are primarily associated with purely transactional negotiations involving the exchange of solely brute interests, relationships are thus fragile, volatile and ephemeral. Proponents of this school of thought emphasise the competitive nature of diplomatic interactions and the negotiation process, in that all negotiations involve 'the realisation of a common interest where conflicting interests are present' (Ikle, 1964). As such the processes of interest-based negotiations and the assessment of the gains from the negotiations are measured solely in terms of one's benefits relative to its competitors (Baldwin, 1993). The aim of diplomatic interactions is usually restricted to short term collaboration and the nature of the relationship is one based on geostrategic concerns and transactional agreements, in lieu of a more honest relationship based on sustainable bilateral cooperation.

The interest-driven relationship-building perspective can be primarily found in the realist tradition in international thought. In the *realpolitik* tradition, diplomacy is 'construed as a continuation of war by other means' (Der Derian, 1987; Morgenthau, 1949), and that motivations and strategies of the state in the game of international diplomacy is rationality and out of self-interest. The focus of this strand of literature has been the state and diplomacy in contrast to war. This literature has a long pedigree and can be traced to the *Clausewitzian* definition of war as the continuation of politics by other means. Echoing

this view is Machiavelli's *Art of War*, in which he argued that in conflict, the practice of diplomacy must be presumed to 'embrace not merely negotiation, but the use of a complex range of moral and psychological weapons' (cited in Roberts, 2017).

The realist conception of diplomatic relationship-building is essentially state-centric and takes place in an anarchic world of competing state powers 'in accordance with the interests, priorities and concerns' of the states (Jönsson, 2012; Constantinou and Sharp, 2016). One of the most prominent philosophers of the twentieth century Raymond Aron wrote on *War and Peace*, 'diplomacy takes place in the shadow of war' and 'relations among states involve, in essence, the alternatives of war and peace', the 'ambassador and the soldier *live* and *symbolise* international relations' that concern diplomacy and war (Aron, 1962,1973). In the realist tradition, diplomacy is 'the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between governments of independent states, extending sometimes also to their relations with dependent territories, and between governments and international institutions; or, more briefly, the conduct of business between states by peaceful means' (Roberts, 2017). This classical notion of diplomacy as the art of resolving conflicts and divergence peacefully often conjures a group of diplomats conducting negotiations on matters of war and peace. And as François de Callières purported 'le secret des négociations était d'harmoniser les intérêts réels des partis en jeu' (The secret of negotiation is to harmonise the real interests of the parties concerned) (1716; cited in Berridge, 2004, p.139).

This interest-based understanding of diplomacy is based on a state-centric security nexus. Diplomacy is perceived as a 'process of dialogue and negotiations by which states in a system conduct their relations and pursue their purposes by means short of war' (Watson,

1982, p. 11). Rationalists believe that states are in constraints of the international structure (Waltz, 2010, c1979), and that diplomacy is a reflection of a state's power and manifest in brute 'material terms' (Morgenthau, 1949). Morgenthau underlines 'the evolution of the power (force) relationship between two states' in international life (Morgenthau, 2012) and that 'the conduct of a nation's foreign affairs by its diplomats is for national power in peace what military strategy and tactics by its military leaders are for national power in war' (Morgenthau, 1949; Jönsson, 2012).

Kissinger's conception of international diplomacy also falls in the category of realists. Central to Kissinger's world view is the assumption that states are its key actors and that their actions are primarily motivated by concerns for their national security, thus international stability is anchored in the 'balance of forces' (Kissinger, c1979, p.60; Otte, 2001, p.190). Diplomatic negotiations *à la* Kissinger is about 'trading concessions', the negotiation parties must strike a 'balance of mutual concessions' to succeed (Kissinger, 1994, pp. 744-745). This realist approach to diplomacy was put into practice at the height of the Cold War where Kissinger initiated the policy of détente with the Soviet Union and was the architect of back-channel or secret diplomacy. Back-channel diplomacy was used to open avenues to reach potential agreements, and once achieved, the negotiation subject would be then 'moved to conventional diplomatic channels' (Kissinger, 1979).

Realist theories of international relations underline not only the strategic but also economic interests in diplomatic relationship-building and argue that states are concerned with 'relative gains' from any diplomatic negotiation (Woolcock, 2012). No agreement can be reached if the economic gains for other competitive or potentially competitive economies are greater than for one's own country in international diplomacy (Grieco, 1990). These

realist perspectives emphasise that increased wealth enhances a state's power and is closely related with a nation's power and influence in international relations.

On the opposite spectrum, another school of thought valorises primarily a value-based diplomatic relationship that is conducive to building a robust and enduring relationship. This school of thought can be traced back to the earliest diplomatic classics. The founder of the first ministry of foreign affairs, Cardinal Richelieu (1637) claimed that diplomacy should aim, not at 'incidental or opportunistic arrangements, but at creating solid and durable relations' (cited in Constantinou, Kerr, and Sharp, 2016). This idea of 'continuous negotiation underscore the importance of always retaining open channels of communication, so that compromise and settlement could follow when conditions allowed for them some time in the future' (Constantinou and Sharp, 2016). In a similar vein, French diplomat serving Louis XIV, François de Callières also regarded diplomacy as an 'essentially moderating influence' and called for 'continuous diplomacy' arguing that 'negotiation should not be a one-time affair, but a constant and necessary ingredient in collecting information needed for policy-making' (Jönsson, 2012; Callières, 1716). De Callières underlined that honesty is 'crucial' in developing 'long-term and sustainable relationships with others and not simply concerned with short-term gains or empire building' (De Callières, 1716; Constantinou and Sharp, 2016).

Resonating this understanding of diplomacy, scholars argue that more than protecting and guiding the individual interests of states, the important aim of diplomacy is to 'promote global norms and values characterising international unity' (Bolewski, 2008). Berridge characterises diplomacy as 'the conduct of international relations by negotiation rather than by force, propaganda, or recourse to law, and by other peaceful means (such as

gathering information or engendering goodwill) which are either directly or indirectly designed to promote negotiation' (Berridge, 2015). The frequency and depth of diplomatic interactions for negotiating towards a 'win-win' solution, in which negotiation parties reach a satisfactory agreement, are not just the sole objective of diplomacy. It is not just the negotiation outcome that is important, but also the wider 'improved nature of the long-term relationship between the parties that results from achieving mutually beneficial agreements' (Fisher, 1987).

Prevailing amongst this values-based school of thought is the constructivist theory of international relations. Constructivist approaches to diplomacy focus on ideational factors to explain how values influence policy. Departing from the idea that within social systems, structures and agents constitute each other through social processes (Adler 2013; Wendt 1999), constructivism moves beyond materialist explanations of international affairs and emphasise the role of values underpinning international diplomacy (Goldstein and Keohane 1993; Ruggie 1998). Adler argued that the philosophical and sociological roots of constructivist IR approaches have, to a certain extent, a constructivists' common ground - the view that 'because the material world does not come classified, the objects of our knowledge are not independent of our interpretations and our language, and are therefore social artefacts' (Adler, 2013, p.113), as such constructivism is a social theory about the role of knowledge and knowledgeable agents in the constitution of social reality (Adler, 2013, p.114). Constructivists' account of international relations premise on an ontology that 'depicts the social world as intersubjectively and collectively meaningful structures and processes' (Adler, 2013, p. 121). Material resources only 'acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded' (Adler, 2013; Wendt, 1995). Echoing this, Pouliot argues that social facts constitute an ontological

common ground for constructivists, and they also provide them with precious ‘foundations of reality’. In his words ‘the very useful plurality of concepts developed by constructivists to account for the social construction of reality revolves around social facts’ (Pouliot, 2004, p.329).

In the constructivist tradition, the ‘world of our making’ is not predetermined in advance by non-human forces (Onuf, 1989; Brown and Ainley, 2005). ‘Anarchy is what states make of it’ and in the constructivist sense of the term diplomacy implies that ‘cooperation is possible under anarchy’ (Wendt, 1992). For instance, negotiating trade agreements ‘affects a state’s willingness to lead with a cooperative move’ in the sense that a state might see itself as a ‘partner in pursuit of some value other than narrow strategic interest’ (Hopf, 1998). A constructivist account of cooperation would ‘reconstruct intersubjective communities’ (Hopf, 1998). As a social theory, constructivism calls attention to identity, and identities are the most proximate causes of choices, preferences and action (Hopf, 1998). Hopf writes that ‘a world without identities is a world of chaos, a world of pervasive and irremediable uncertainty, and a world much more dangerous than anarchy. Identities perform three necessary functions in a society; they tell you and others who you are and they tell you who others are’ (Hopf, 1998). A foreign policy choice can be seen as ‘a kind of social practice that at once constitutes and empowers a state, define its socially recognised competence, and secures the boundaries that differentiate the domestic and international economic and political spheres of practice’ (Ashley, 1988).

By the same token, for many Chinese scholars who adopt a social-constructivist approach to diplomacy argue that China’s interaction with others in international diplomacy is ‘a process of mutually influencing and reshaping each other’s identity and interests’.

Diplomatic ‘relations are multifold. So are identities. Relations are also fluid, as are identities’ (Zhu, 2010). A constructivist analysis of international diplomacy brings to the fore the process during which negotiators come to share objectives and for the role of trust in the process (Woolcock, 2012). Several constructivist political scientists have identified the conditions that enables a persuasion attempt to lead actors to change negotiation strategy or preference (Risse and Kleine, 2010). For instance, in the constructivist explanation of EU negotiations, scholars have discovered ‘the possible socialisation of EU diplomats into a common European identity’ (Checkel, 2005; Odell, 2012).

Another perspective that shares many ideas with constructivism is the English School of International Relations and its emphasis on the importance of values as building blocks of diplomacy. Scholars of the English School focus on states' shared values and how they may regulate international relations. In their view, diplomacy is portrayed as a defining activity of international relations, and that the various activities and institutions of diplomacy are not only a ‘distinguishing feature’ but also a ‘foundational element of any society of independent states’ (Jackson, 2002, p.1; Wight, 1991). Diplomacy plays a central role in world politics which is viewed as a historically emerging and social phenomenon (Neumann, 2003). More specifically, diplomacy is ‘central to the historically contingent evolution of the specifically European international society’, and ‘the exchange of diplomatic missions is made possible by the acceptance by the states concerned of complex rules and conventions’ (Hurrell, 2002). According to Hedley Bull, diplomacy’s functions include, *inter alia*, the ‘minimisation of the effects of friction’ and ‘symbolising the existence of the society of states’ (Bull, 1977, pp. 171-172).

Borrowing the international society idea of the English School, Sharp developed a

diplomatic theory of international relations, in which he argued that 'international societies integrating and disintegrating, expanding and contracting, concentrating and diffusing' is partly because of 'the export, promotion and imposition of values that accompanies policies of expansion together with the resulting resistence' (Sharp, 2009, p.121). He further argues that there is a specific 'diplomatic understanding of the world', by which he means an understanding that 'privileges the plural character of human existence', that people live in groups and conditions of separateness, and that differences and disputes occur between intra- and inter-group relations; diplomacy manages these 'relations of separateness peacefully'; thus thinking diplomatically about the world is an approach to (understanding) diplomacy that privileges 'the maintenance of relations' (Sharp, 2009, p.10).

Despite the merits of the two main schools of thought in the scholarly literature, the interest-based and the value-based schools of thought do not adequately explain the actual process of the making of diplomatic relationships, nor do they fully grasp the multifaceted and inherently relational nature of diplomatic relationship-building. The existing studies are embroiled in the rationalist–constructivist debate within international relations scholarship, and preoccupied by the dichotomy of interests and values. However, in reality diplomatic relationship-building is often based on an interplay of interests and values. The process of diplomatic relationship-building can be conceived along a continuum from 'hard core interests' to 'soft intangible values' with interest and values dominating the two ends of the spectrum. For example, trade negotiations would situate near the interest-based end of the continuum, while climate negotiations would be nearer the value-based end of the continuum. But the black and white distinction of interests and values in the majority of the existing IR approaches to diplomacy renders it difficult to observe the variations

between the common-interests based diplomatic relationship-building and the shared-values based diplomatic relationship-building, it is more problematic to explain diplomatic relationship-building when the convenience of shared interests and the congruence of shared values falter or disappear, not to mention the subtleties and variations between the factors at play in the diplomatic relationship-building process.

Both the interest-based and value-based models of capturing diplomatic relationship-building raise more questions than answers. As Der Derian proported 'diplomacy of late modernity exceeds the representational capabilities of traditional international relations theory' (Der Derian, 1992). For diplomacy is 'not just a functional or structural process. It is not just international or interstate. It is definitely not just interpersonal. […] Diplomacy is primarily intersubjective' (Constantinou, 1996, p. 25). This relates to the fact that IR theories are more substantialist rather than relationist (Jönsson and Hall, 2005). Substantialist thinking presumes that 'entities precede interaction, or that entities are already entities before they enter into social relations with other entities (Jackson and Nexon, 1999). Relational thinking, however, is based on a different premise that 'individuals, groups, and social systems are contingent, changing social products of interaction' (Tilly, 2002), and that 'configurations of ties – recurrent sociocultural interaction – between social aggregates of various sorts and their component parts' are the 'building blocks of social analysis' (Tilly, 1996; Jackson and Nexon, 1999). As such, a relational perspective approaches diplomacy as 'processes and relationships that contribute to the differentiation of political space' (Jönsson and Hall, 2005, p. 15). Although few of the existing IR theories are purely susbstantialists or relationalists *per se*, the underlying binary of interest-based and value-based models has obscured our understanding of the *process* of diplomatic relationship-building.

The process of diplomatic relationship-building entails how parties compromise and overcome differences to combine divergent positions into a joint decision and to generate mutual trust for further fruitful cooperation (Zartman and Berman, 1982). Differences in negotiation objectives and priorities become particularly acute when different cultures engage with each other. The more pronounced the cultural contrasts between the negotiating parties, the greater the 'potential for misunderstanding […] may impinge on negotiation' (Fisher, 1980). Existing IR approaches often simplify this human and cultural texture of diplomatic relationship-building, failing to take into sufficient account of the cultural and relational factors of diplomatic interactions. This calls for a theoretically informed analysis which factors in that diplomatic actors are part of an evolving configuration of social relations and an approach that not only disentangles the brute interests and intangible values underpinning diplomacy, but also the hidden and deeper relational layers of diplomatic relationship-building.

Although the scholarly literature of diplomatic studies has alluded to these aspects of diplomatic relationship-building, most research is often descriptive, embedded in the tradition of diplomatic history and diplomatic memoirs. While existing studies demonstrate the growing diversity of governmental and non-governmental actors in diplomatic fora, they do not adequately explain the complex process operating, nor the relational dynamics interlocking the web of actors. Despite acknowledging the evolving nature of diplomatic mechanisms in general terms, most studies have failed to explain the intricacies by which certain diplomatic actors become powerful relative to other actors in the relational dynamics of diplomatic relationship-building process.

Moreover, despite the value of the empirical study of diplomacy, theorising diplomacy has not benefited from the rich empirical descriptions, and most are often lost in the mists of cross-disciplinary compartmentalisation. The 'resistance to theory' that diplomacy studies has exhibited (Der Derian 1987; Constantinou 1996; Murray 2008; Sharp, 2009) is similar to what Raymond Aron writes about the contrast between empirical and theoretical interpretations of international relations, which is 'comparable to the difference between a photograph and a painted portrait. The photograph shows everything that can be seen by the naked eye. The painted portrait does not show everything that can be seen by the naked eye, but it shows something the naked eye cannot see: the human essence of the person who is portrayed' (Aron, 1966, p.3). The underlying theoretical impediment is that there lack a synthetic analysis and richly developed theoretical framework bringing the various dimensions of diplomatic relationship-building together to interpret the dynamism of diplomatic interactions, to understand the forces which may promote or hinder diplomatic relationship-building, and to better comprehend the social and political 'density' underpinning diplomatic interactions.

This thesis argues that the multitude of actors involved in the conduct of international diplomacy, the characteristics and patterns of their relations, the social elements shaping diplomatic interactions are interrelated and influence the process of diplomatic relationship-building. A segmented analysis of these elements cannot yield a full understanding of the making of diplomatic relations. The process of diplomatic relationship-building cannot be understood without better appreciation for the multitude of actors involved, and the ways in which these actors connect with each other in diplomatic fora; the diplomatic objectives, priorities manifested through their interactions together with the multiplicity of issue areas under negotiation in these processes of diplomatic

interactions cannot be understood without appreciation of the diplomatic approaches, and the deeper, cultural and social layers within which diplomatic interactions are embedded.

In short, existing studies have not yet sufficiently opened the 'black box' of diplomatic relationship-building, little is known about the process of sustaining and amending diplomatic relations (Bjola, 2013, p. 13). As Sharp writes 'what diplomacy is remains a mystery … neither the diplomats nor those who study them provide much insight into how and why diplomacy works' (Sharp, 2009, pp.1-2). Less is known about how different factors have differing degrees of salience in the process of diplomatic relationship-building. The existing literature has not yet satisfactorily captured the relational essence of diplomatic relationship-building which accounts for the 'relational gap' in the scholarly literature that merits further investigation and substantiation. This grey area underscores the need for a more nuanced model of diplomatic relationship-building with its set of variables and characteristics to identify and distinguish the various elements at play in diplomatic practices that may provide in-depth understanding of diplomatic relationship-building. The 'relational gap' presents a compelling avenue of research to better capture the human and relational essence of diplomatic relationship-building, and to better understand diplomatic relationship-building, in all its complexity. In particular, there is a need of an alternative theoretical model to further refine and explicate the complex factors that shape the multifaceted, multidimensional and multi-actor relationship between the EU and China, and to adequately capture the complex, relational dynamics of diplomatic relationship-building process.

3.3 Shared intentions

The development of a new theoretical model to address the 'relational gap' in diplomatic studies can be further explored through the philosophical lens of social reality and the concept of shared intentions in particular. Philosophical understandings of social reality offer an analytical entrance to better understand processes of diplomatic relationship-building (Bjola, 2013). In particular, the core concept of shared intentions philosophises about the conditions for social exchanges, which could provide the philosophical lens to interpret the way in which diplomatic relationship-building takes place. The idea of shared intentions has the potential to provide an alternative light to illuminate the process of diplomatic relationship-building.

The concept of shared intentions or collective intentionality as it is sometimes referred to in the philosophical literature is exemplified by John Searle's seminal work *The Construction of Social Reality* (1995), in which a theory of social ontology was introduced to explain the construction of social and institutional reality. For Searle, human social reality exists in 'institutional facts', and there is a fundamental distinction between observer-dependent and observer-independent phenomena. Observer independent phenomena are those features of reality that exist independently of humans. For example, the chemical bond, the solar system and gravitational attraction are all observer-independent phenomena. Observer dependent phenomena are facts whose existence depends on humans. Notable examples are government, money and a group of people making decisions. In short, if the phenomenon could not have existed if there had never been any conscious human beings with any intentional states, that phenomenon is observer dependent. Distinguishing between observer-dependent phenomena and observer-independent phenomena enables us to understand the sharp distinction between

brute material facts and institutional facts. Brute material facts ‘exist independently of any human institution; institutional facts can exist only within human institutions’ (Searle, 2010, p.27). Searle argues that institutional facts describe observer-dependent phenomena, while brute or ‘objective’ facts are related to observer-independent phenomena. As such, the construction of the social realm is predominately concerned with institutional facts, as opposed to brute facts. Money, governments, economic transactions are all examples of institutional facts.

The crucial elements of observer-dependent phenomena lies in a logical structure of institutional facts which Searle explains further by analysing a ‘systematic set of relationships between collective intentionality, the assignment of status functions, constitutive rules, institutional facts, and deontic powers’ (Searle, 2005, p. 22). In which the core notion is collective intentionality. With ‘emphasis on the collective aspect of human society and social ontology’, the ‘fundamental building bloc’ of all human society is that human beings have the ‘capacity for collective intentionality’, and that ‘the most important form of collective intentionality is collective intentions in planning and acting’, that is ‘collective prior intentions and collective intentions-in-action’ (Searle, 2010). Collective intentionality covers not only collective intentions but also collective beliefs and collective desires (Searle, 2005). Collective intentionality exists ‘both in the form of cooperative behaviour and in consciously shared attitudes such as shared desires, beliefs, and intentions’ (Searle, c2003, p. 198). The classic example of the intentions shared by different people as part of them doing something together is an orchestra performing a concert or a group of diplomats working together to negotiate an international agreement.

The interpretation of social reality by means of collective intentionality, or shared

intentions, provides interesting insights into the study of international relations and could be recommended as a 'theoretical anchor for understanding the processes of making relations of enmity or friendship' in international affairs (Bjola, 2013). Since shared intentions are the building blocks of social reality and is constitutive of any social relationship (Thompson, 2017), shared intentions thus underpins diplomatic relationships including the macro-level state-to-state diplomatic relationship and the relatively micro-level relationship among institutional actors, and is thus pertinent to explaining the process of diplomatic relationship-building. Indeed, as scholars purport collective intentionality can be interpreted as 'a catalyst for relationships of friendship, whereas the lack of it paves the way for relations of rivalry and enmity' in diplomacy (Bjola, 2013, p. 15). The philosophical concept of collective intentionality or shared intentions promises a nuanced perspective to capture the essence of diplomatic relationship-building, and invites us to decipher diplomatic relationship-building in a new light. Shared intentions promise to provide an arguably more convincing conceptual angle than the traditional interests-versus-values angle to capture diplomatic relationship-building for the following three reasons.

First, the concept of shared intentions can help us gain deeper insights into the ontological and epistemological foundations of diplomatic relationship-building. The notion of shared intentions brings the ontological underpinning of diplomatic relationship-building to the fore. Searle makes an important point that an 'ontologically subjective' fact can be 'epistemologically objective' in the sense that its existence, within limits, can be established by systemic inquiry (Ruggie, 1998). Ruggie differentiated between two types of social facts – collective states of mind about objects and states of affairs in the world, and those social facts which require human institutions for their existence. He elaborated

this in the constructivist vein, that sovereignty, like Searle's classic example of money, exists only within a 'framework of shared meaning that recognizes it to be valid—that is, by virtue of collective intentionality'. Moreover, collective intentionality also 'creates new rights and responsibilities within the system of states' (Ruggie, 1998). International negotiations, such as those of the Bretton Woods negotiations and corresponding efforts to establish an international trade regime produces meaning, in that they also 'established intersubjective meanings' of international institutional activity and 'produced more than external standards of behaviour and rules of conduct in monetary and trade relations' (Ruggie, 1998, p.870). The efforts to establish an international trade regime 'established intersubjective frameworks of understanding that included a shared narrative about the conditions that had made the regimes necessary and the objectives they were intended to accomplish', moreover, they generated a grammar, on the basis of which 'states agreed to interpret the appropriateness of future acts that they could not possibly foresee' (Ruggie, 1998, p.870).

Second, from a diplomatic studies perspective, shared intentions may be the key to unlock diplomatic relationship-building, which lies in the fact that the analysis of intentions is needed for the explanation of collective action and for the explanation of the social phenomena that rely on collective action. As many scholars have purported 'joint action requires joint or shared intentions' and it is 'coordination with others that raises interesting issues regarding the intentional structure of joint action' (Tollefsen, 2014). For groups to have shared intentions, decision-making in the group must be institutionalised. Intentionality implies that agents engage in purposive action (Wendt 1999). In this logic, the development of institutionalised collaboration is interlinked with the development of shared intentions. A group or relationship that shares a joint intention requires more

mediated and more complex institutionalisation, as 'the less we know the people we consider part of the 'we', the more we demand on institutions to bring us together' (Prichard, 2017). Collective intentionality arises from group collaboration, and 'collectively intentional social groups are differentially capacitated, depending on the degree of cohesiveness of the group, the institutional forms in which they exist' (Prichard, 2017). The notion of 'collective intentionality' characterises how people engage in behavior toward realising collective goals (Searle, 1995). People 'often work to sustain shared […] desires because of their role in the formation and stability of our interpersonal connections. We often rely on them to strengthen mutual bonds and to further our pursuit of collaborative activities. And they often play a crucial role in structuring the values, interests, and desires we adopt as group members. When shared desires are intimately tied to ends that we seek together, they often become shared attitudes' (Huebner and Hedhal, 2017). Moreover, these 'fostered shared desires' are 'directed upon shared ends' (Huebner and Hedhal, 2017).

The role of shared intentions in human society is of unique value to understanding diplomatic relationship-building. Ideas on collective intentionality are essentially ideas about 'doing something together', and that 'attitudes of collective intentionality are at the centre of most of our actual institutions', insights from 'the theory of collective intentionality can bring to the fore new perspectives in the debates surrounding collective action' (Jankovic and Ludwig, 2017). Institutional actions that are 'based on collective attitudes' such as 'our' belief or intentions involve 'a stronger form of interdependence', as 'parties to a collective attitude take each other's agency more seriously than agents whose attitudes are regarded merely as parameters in strategic interaction' or when parties 'mutually adjust' their behaviour in light of each other's attitudes (Hindriks, 2017). The

extent to which diplomatic relationship-building process can result in a stronger relationship is related to the level of shared intentions generated or developed through the process. As 'shared intentions assist the potential satisfaction of each individual's action' (Bratman 1993), shared intentions can be interpreted as an 'amalgam of singular intentions that provide a possible means for consensus making and cooperation in a particular context' (Hasanov and Beaumont, 2016). Shared intentions are 'the backbone that encloses the processes of social belonging and accomplishment of a deliberate goal' (Hasanov and Beaumont, 2016). To a certain extent, the process of diplomatic relationship-building is a carrier of socially constructed shared intentions.

Third, in a similar vein shared intentions provide an important lens to evaluate the depth and strength of diplomatic relationships, and the various factors influencing the process of diplomatic interactions. As Searle's philosophy denotes collective intentions underpin 'the ways we organise our social relations, our cooperative efforts, and our inherently social-relational powers as a community', this is important to diplomatic studies insofar as it can help illuminate 'how the purposes and ends of social relations are shaped and for what ends that are pursued' (Thompson, 2017). A philosophical reading of 'shared cooperative activity' invokes the relations between the people engaged in the activity, 'a shared cooperative action is distinct from mere uncoordinated actions of unrelated individuals in that the individuals who engage in it exhibit attitudes that bear particular relations to each other' (Bratman, 1992; Tollefsen, 2014).

Through the prism of shared intentions, diplomatic cooperation is a form of collective intentionality, but a much 'stronger form of collective intentionality because it involves more than the participants just having certain attitudes together with mutual belief' (Searle,

2010). ‘Collective intentionality requires a different kind of mental-state construct, namely an intentional attitude that although individually held is different from and not reducible to an ‘ordinary’ intention’ (Grosz and Hunsberger, 2006; Searle, 1995). It also entails certain shared we-attitudes such as intentions and beliefs and also emotions underpinning joint action (Tuomela, 2002). The processes of diplomatic relationship-building may stimulate shared consciousness and intentions to cooperate which can be captured through the development of shared intentions. In the broader philosophical literature, the ‘we-intention to perform a joint action involves the intention to perform that action, a belief that a sufficient number of other individuals will participate in its performance, and a belief that others believe that there an opportunity to perform the action’ (Tuomela, 1984; Tollefsen, 2014). Stronger and weaker forms of ‘we-intentions’ can be distinguished, with the strongest being the ‘we-intentions’ involving ‘an irreducible collective commitment’, the weakest is the ‘I-mode collective intentionality’ with only private commitments (Tuomela, 1984).

Scholars of international relations have implicitly or explicitly referred to the concept of shared intentions in their efforts to elucidate international cooperation. For example, Slaughter argues that in international relations ‘collaborative power’ is ‘the power of many can accomplish more than anyone can do alone’ (Slaughter, 2011). This is resonated in Bratman’s idea that global governance can be characterised as a sort of ‘collective planning agency’; it is about ‘how states together steer the international community into the future’ (Bratman, 1999, 2014; Mitzen, 2010). Seeing global governance in light of the philosophy of shared intentions highlights the role of international forums as the site where this intentionality materialises and is organised (Mitzen, 2010, p.65). As Mitzen argues, the influence of collective intentionality on individual intentionality is correlated with the

strength of the actors' joint commitment to doing something together and the public openness of the commitment (Mitzen, 2005). This argument could shed new light on the process through which an international agreement has been negotiated.

Moreover, the explanatory power that shared intentions have insofar as diplomatic relationship-building is concerned can be further investigated by looking into the goals or objectives entailed in diplomatic negotiations. According to Miller and Tuomela, goals can be regarded as analogous to intentions, 'goal can be replaced by intention' (Miller and Tuomela, 2014). For example in relation to 'the shared goal of reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere', people who share the goal share the belief that the goal is shared and is thus intentional (Miller and Tuomela, 2014). Bratman argues that shared intentions 'form a reliable and predictable guide for thought and action' and that shared intentions 'give rise to shared action that is both reliable and predictable' (Bratman 1992, 1993, 2014; Hindriks, 2017). In a similar vein, Tuomela argues that 'a key difference between attitudes held in the we-mode versus attitudes held in the I-mode is that only the former involve collective commitment that gives rise to *sui generis* social obligations' (Tuomela, 2003, 2013; Hindriks, 2017). He purports that 'cooperative solutions cannot rationally be arrived at without a substantial amount of we-mode action towards shared collective goals' (Tuomela, 2002), and that 'we-mode attitudes are required by institutional action' (Tuomela, 2002, 2007). Moreover, 'we-intentions' are 'agreement-based social intentions that agents have in situations of joint action', with content that 'can be taken to be something like 'to do X jointly' or 'we to do X jointly'' (Tuomela, 1995; Grosz and Hunsberger, 2006).

Collective attitudes 'serve well to explain the symbolic significance involved in

institutions' and that 'institutions supported by collective attitudes, particularly those in the we-mode, might be especially successful in generating cooperative benefits', in short, 'collective attitudes enable institutions to fulfil their function' (Hindriks, 2017). We-intention is a participant's 'slice' of an aim-intention based on a group reason. (Tuomela, 2007). Importantly, the 'joint intention toward X' is assumed to entail 'collective commitment toward X' (Tuomela, 2007). This understanding could be valuable to explain negotiation breakthroughs in protracted international climate change negotiations. In this logic, diplomatic relationship-building is a process that generates and regenerates shared intentions. The strengthening of shared intentions could be fundamental to reaching an international agreement to curb greenhouse gas emissions. The idea of shared intentions is inherently a social theory of reality and as Wendt and Duvall argued although 'social ontologies do not directly dictate the content of substantive theories, they do have conceptual and methodological consequences for how IR theorists approach those phenomena they seek to explain, and thus for the development of their theories' (Wendt and Duvall, 1989, p. 55). Wendt further explained that 'social theories do not determine the content of our international theorising, but they do structure the questions we ask about world politics and our approaches to answering these questions' (Wendt, 1992a, p.422; Jørgensen, 2010, p. 41).

3.4 Three constitutive elements of diplomatic relationship-building

3.4.1 Constitutive theorising

From a diplomatic studies perspective, while the concept of shared intentions provides the philosophical basis for theorising about processes of relationship-building, understanding the process of diplomatic relationship-building requires us to translate shared intentions

into empirically justifiable theoretical reflections on diplomatic relationship-building. As explained in the previous section, the development of shared intentions unfolds over time in diplomatic relationship-building, which is shaped by a multitude of variables. Central to investigating the process of diplomatic relationship-building is to capture and measure the various elements at play shaping the formation and development of shared intentions. To this end, there is a need to identity key elements in diplomatic relationship-building to further the investigation of the process of diplomatic relationship-building. The logic of a constitutive framework would prove to be particularly pertinent to this endeavour. A constitutive theoretical framework not only reflects upon the process and allows us to identify the discrete elements influencing diplomatic relationship-building, it also links the different elements to allow us to further systematically examine the process of diplomatic relationship-building. In lieu of causal theorising, a constitutive logic would be most applicable to examining diplomatic relationship-building.

This is because constitutive theory provides explanations of what an entity is (Went, 1998). The questions that constitutive theories ask are 'how-possible?' and 'what?', in contrast to causal theories asking 'why?' and to some extent 'how?' (Wendt, 1999, p.78). The main logic of constitutive theorising is not only to reveal the determination of the causal impact of single variables, but also, and perhaps more important, the mutual constitution of these variables themselves. Unlike causal theoretical framework that depicts the impact of one factor on another factor, constitutive theorising endeavours to show how something is possible and what it is. As constitutive scholars argue, 'things have a set of powers in virtue of how they are constituted' (Wight, 2006), and it is precisely the what and how things are constituted that underpins the examination of the process of diplomatic relationship-building.

Yet, causal and constitutive theorising, and relevant causal and constitutive questions are not to be understood as competition of replacement, or to be treated in 'zero-sum, epistemological terms' (Wendt, 1999, p.85). As Wendt purports 'causal and constitutive theories simply ask different questions. Constitutive theories' primary objective is to 'account for the properties of things by reference to the structures in virtue of which they exist' (Wendt, 1998, p.105; Cummins, 1983). Constitutive theory does not attempt to 'generate, or track, causal patterns in time, but asks 'how is this thing constituted?' (Dunne *et al.*, 2013, p.411). This explanatory role of constitutive theorising matters for how we think about international politics in general, and diplomatic relationship-building in particular.

Constitutive scholars tell stories of an 'insider's', so as to 'make us understand what the events mean, in a sense distinct from any meaning found in unearthing the laws of nature' (Hollis and Smith, 1990). The purpose of telling such a story is to address the particular kind of question of 'how are things in the world put together so that they have the properties that they do?' (Wendt, 1998, p.103). In this context, constitutive arguments should be evaluated in terms of their conceptual or logical necessity, but never causally. It is worth noting that some IR scholars believe constitution to have causal implications (Onuf, 1989; Kratochwil, 1989), which at its strongest form, 'theorises a necessary but insufficient condition for an outcome' (Lebow, 2009). This type of constitutive theorising 'seeks to develop layered accounts of human behaviour' while directing our attention to the 'social processes and interactions […] and outcomes' (Lebow, 2009, p.4).

At its essence, diplomacy is a 'regulated process of communication between at least two

subjects, conducted by their representative agents over a particular object. This, however, should not be treated as an answer to the theoretical quest and question of diplomacy but, rather, as a gathering of persistent question marks: what…? Why…? How…?" (Constantinou 1996, p. 26). As Fearon and Wendt purported 'Constitutive theorising seeks to establish conditions of possibility for objects or events by showing what they are made of and how they are organised. As such, the object or event in question is an 'effect' of the conditions that make it possible, but it does not exist independent of them' (1992). A constitutive theoretical framework would help deconstruct the process of diplomatic relationship-building that existing scholarship has not satisfactorily explained, and singles out the elements in processes of diplomatic interactions to trace and reconstruct the process, and explain how various elements of relationship-building come together to create and shape a relationship.

3.4.2 Three essential elements

Anchored in constitutive theorising, three key elements can be identified as critical to understanding diplomatic relationship-building, and promise to cast light on the fundamental underpinning of shared intentions in the process of diplomatic relationship-building. The first crucial element in diplomatic relationship-building is *Structure*. Structural analysis of the diplomatic relationship-building process concerns the institutional dynamics of diplomacy and enables us to uncover the actors and mechanisms involved in the process of diplomatic relationship-building. For the purpose of this research, the working definition of structure refers to the institutional actors involved in the process and the institutional mechanisms by which actors interact. The idea is that there is a 'diplomatic interaction framework' in international diplomacy, and understanding this structure is essential for understanding international diplomacy (Faizullaev, 2014,

p.280). Understanding the structure emphasises the coordinated efforts and activities among different actors at various levels (Faizullaev, 2014, p.279), and 'the pattern of constraints under which a diplomat must operate, and 'the structure of the system' the diplomat represents (Friedheim, 1999, p. 153). A focus on the structural dynamics is the first step to enhancing understanding of the processes in diplomatic relationship-building.

Structure in the context of diplomatic relationship-building relates to the configurations of institutional actors involved in diplomatic relationship-building, and their influence on the process of diplomatic relationship-building. In order to understand the factors that contribute to effective negotiation in international relations, one must consider the actors upon the stage, the actors who bring the negotiations and relationship to life (Rubin, c2002, p.98). These actors are often groups or organisations with complex internal workings of their own. For example, MacIntye argued that a state's capability to decisively carry out policy in a timely manner is closely related with the configuration of political institutions (MacIntye, 2003). The institutional configurations that 'spread policy-making power between multiple decision-making bodies' create 'less decisiveness in the policy-making process and policy outcomes', and policy decisions regarding international commitments may be more difficult to reach with a decentralised political system with multiple power centres (MacIntye, 2003).

The structural element in this research also includes the mechanisms linking the institutional actors. Understanding the relations among diplomatic actors is essential for understanding international diplomacy and diplomatic negotiations (Faizullaev, 2014, p. 280). This is related to the understanding that the forms of diplomatic exchanges, and the making and remaking of international relations through diplomatic practice is constantly

evolving. The idea that diplomacy is reserved to diplomats, and that the practice of diplomacy is limited to the analysis of the international realm of sovereign states in the context of high politics no longer applies to contemporary diplomacy. Diplomacy is a 'more open-ended process where diplomatic agency includes the state, but also a range of non-state actors' are actively involved and diplomatic possesses entail 'economic, cultural, social as well as political forms and functions' (Lee and Hocking, 2011, p.4).

Thus to assess the process of diplomacy, it is necessary to cast the net wide to capture the mechanisms that enable relationships to develop between diplomatic institutions and a broader array of actors engaged in the practices that have conventionally been defined as core diplomatic tasks to analyse how new tasks emerge and become more or less recognised as constituting 'diplomacy' (Lee and Hocking, 2011, p.6). The mechanisms through which diplomacy is being conducted at both the state and international levels are interwoven into a set of network-based processes. This is especially true in regard to the functions of summit diplomacy. For example, the annual EU-China summits attended by the highest level of political elites from both sides show the function of one of the most important diplomatic mechanisms – summitry in making EU-China relations, and the evolution in summitry as a state formally meets and negotiates with a regional multi-national body (Constantinou, Kerr, and Sharp, 2016, p.235). The 'allure of diplomatic interactions at the summit level is that it involves major decision-makers and leaders most responsible for governmental action'. And when 'heads of states make formal presentations or sign a declaration after a meeting, their presence tends to be symbolic, emphasising the importance of the subject matter and of the conference' (Leguey-Feilleux, 2009, p. 294). Others purport that while some summit meeting have symbolic meaning or ceremonial purpose, the instrumental value of summitry lies in the fact that summit talks

have to deal with specific issues ‘rather than general atmospherics’, summit talks should be ‘directed towards substance, not cosmetics’ (Otte, 2001, p. 202). Summit diplomacy often pertains to ‘the conclusion of important international agreements’, if the agreement has been reached, top officials meet to ‘formalise the document at a signatory ceremonial event’. Yet, some more delicate negotiations may require the intervention of heads of state to negotiate the last remaining difference, especially when ‘the last points are bitterly contested’; or if the negotiations have reached a stalemate, some summit meetings may impose deadlines on the negotiating processs to move the negotiations forward (Leguey-Feilleux, 2009, p. 305).

On a deeper level, negotiation scholars also purport that states institutionalise their relations into international regimes, and such regimes ‘both expand and limit their negotiating possibilities’ (Spector and Zartman, 2003). Structure is the embodiment of ‘the distribution of resources, and of the distribution of capabilities – that is the realisation of power’ in diplomacy and international negotiations. This very structure may ‘impede or facilitate free flow of information’ in diplomatic fora and therefore has an ‘independent and strong influence on the process and outcome of’ negotiations (Nikolaev, 2007, p. xv). In this vein, structure has been taken into account to disentangle how diplomacy and domestic politics interact (Putnam, 1988), and to explain the outcome of complex negotiations which involve both inter-entity and intra-entity levels, where ‘two or more entities have to negotiate an agreement between them’ and the agreement needs to be approved within each entity (Nikolaev, 2007). The structural aspect of diplomatic relationship-building entails mainly the institutional actors and the institutional mechanisms through which the actors interact, in shaping diplomatic relationship-building.

The second element that is vital to understanding the process of diplomatic relationship-building is substance. Substance through the prism of diplomatic studies is about the issues under negotiation in diplomatic fora. The importance of examining diplomatic substance is related with the growing complexity of issue areas in diplomacy, and the complex constellation of negotiation objectives and priorities manifested in diplomatic interactions. 'Information is central to any negotiation. It affects negotiation both nonstrategically, as simple information about the way the world works, and strategically, as a resource that parties may have greater or lesser incentives to share' (Odell and Tingley, 2015). The 'increasing complex and technical nature of the ever-widening range of issues considered on the international agenda' have made international 'policy coordination not only increasingly necessary but also increasingly difficult' (Haas, 1992). The ancient craft of diplomacy has evolved involving not only 'representing, informing and negotiating as its main activities of diplomacy', today's diplomacy has become 'more complex, encompassing a broader dialogue between a larger number of stakeholders and specialised experts […] it is more horizontal and more transparent [...] it deploys new methods, new directions, new approaches' (Rozental and Buenrostro, 2013). The scope of diplomatic action has expanded, what used to be 'exclusively domestic' now has 'international ramifications, beyond national boundaries, the distinction between domestic and international affairs is harder to maintain' (Keohane and Nye, 1989, pp. 24-37), the issue areas that diplomacy now covers are growing wider and deeper.

This growing multiplicity of issues in diplomatic talks has profound consequences for diplomatic relationship-building. It renders the fact that the activities which used to be the preserve of traditional diplomats are now shared by more stakeholders and institutional

actors. It opens the question of what responsibilities traditional diplomatic institutions should keep, what other institutional actors should undertake and how the various institutional actors involved can work together effectively and efficiently. Hoffmann purported that whether an issue is of 'high politics' or 'low politics' (Hoffmann, 1966) affects profoundly international negotiations and diplomacy. In light of European integration, Hoffman argues that negotiating issues that spill over to questions affecting key national interests, or issues that raise stark differences in the calculations of the national interest among European states play an important role in the process of European integration. The 'uniting of Europe' can be achieved in the 'low politics' of economic sphere, European nations can form an 'indubitably solid economic network' and cooperation would work well in the realm of economic relations (Hoffmann, 1966). However Hoffmann thinks that European integration in the 'high politics' of foreign and defence policies would be relatively hard to achieve, as foreign and defence policies are the nucleus of national interests.

The substance of diplomacy covers not just traditional matters of high politics or issues falling under the rubric of 'low politics', but also 'new issues', such as the environment and sustainable development. The extended spectrum of issue areas accentuate the fluid line between what is international and what is domestic in international diplomacy. This phenomena is arguably most manifest when representatives meet at multilateral forums to discuss cross-border issues, such as the climate negotiations at the UN, delegates include representatives of different foreign ministries and also members from other ministries who have specific expertise over the issue-area in question. Diplomatic processes involving diplomatic efforts on solving transnational issues are increasingly taking us beyond the traditional issue-areas of diplomacy (Sending, Pouliot and Neumann, 2015, p.18).

Scholarly efforts have also addressed how ‘an issue typology can shed light on the nature of the interactions between domestic political forces and international negotiations’ and that ‘the decision-making process varies depending on the type of issue that is involved in a particular situation’ (Boyer, 2000, p.185). The type of issue area being discussed in the process is linked to whether the issue is considered more relevant to domestic policy or foreign policy categories. International negotiations on issues that are ‘perceived as having limited domestic impact or a crisis is in evidence’ would be very different from the international negotiations on issues considered having strong domestic implications (Boyer, 2000, p.193). For instance, there would be less domestic-level consultation in the former case, alternatively, there would be more domestic institutional actors and domestic-level policy consultation process occurring in the latter case in which the issues under-negotiation is with significant domestic stakes (Boyer, 2000; Mayer, 1992). In a similar vein, Jönsson and Hall observe that the EU’s diplomacy is different ‘depending on which issue you select. As functional segmentation tend to entail fragmentation of policy-making, the EU has been characterised as a ‘prismatic political system’, in which ‘rays of activity and authority are scattered or focused differently in various policy areas’ (cited in Jönsson and Hall, 2005, p.151).

This widening and deepening of diplomatic substance present different types of challenges and new expectations for the conduct of diplomacy in relationship-building. As diplomatic negotiations involve information and knowledge exchange (Adair and Brett, 2005). To a certain extent, the degree of complexity of the issues indicates the strength of the relationship. Only strong relationship can deal with a diversity of issues. Diplomatic substance is about how parties deal with complex issues, often involving technical and

political discussions, and how they deal with red-lines and cooperation objectives.

The substance of diplomatic talks also reflects important intentions different parties involved around the negotiation table hold. Substance of the talks and the negotiation agendas are typically constructions created by the negotiation parties, and depends to a large extent on the negotiation interests, intentions and culture of the parties who have created them (Sjostedt, 2002). These issues are highly consequential for the unfolding of the whole negotiation process. The interpretation and analysis of the substance of diplomacy entails analysing the agenda of the negotiation rounds and the process by which the discussions were conducted. The importance of substance is also linked with the momentum of the negotiation which is crucial to understand the way in which negotiations have unfolded.

The third influential element in the process of diplomatic relationship-building is *style*. In political science, style is viewed as a concept to comprehend social action, and is often treated as an 'analytical category for understanding social reality' (Hariman, 1995, p.9). As a rather elusive concept, the conceptualisation of style has mainly been treated as a means of communication, or as some scholars define it as 'a replication of patterning, whether in human behaviour or in the artefacts produced by human behaviour, that results from a series of choices made within some set of constraints' (Meyer, 1979, p. 3). Albeit the definitional variances about style, scholars have purported that 'one can thus distinguish types, or species, of diplomacy and it is important that these distinctions should be recognised' (Nicolson, 1963, p.127), as comprehending 'diplomatic style provides significant analytical insight in a state's foreign policy' (Robertson, 2016).

One of the most detailed examples of using diplomatic style as a means to provide analytical insight into foreign policy is the study exploring South Korean diplomatic style (Robertson, 2016). Building on Meyer's definition of style, Robertson claimed that diplomatic style is 'the replication in behaviour, or the artefacts produced by behaviour, that results from choices made within the constraints specific to diplomatic interaction' (Robertson, 2016, p.53). The author argued that diplomatic style provides important analytical insight into a state's foreign policy by 'highlighting phenomena of policy relevance' in the case of South Korea. He demonstrated that South Korea's diplomatic style – which has 'a tendency towards emotionalism, and is affected by status, generational change, cosmopolitanism, and estrangement from international society – can be a guide to understanding the country's contemporary foreign policy' (Robertson, 2016). The question of style in the conduct of a nation's foreign relations have ignited debate among IR scholars. Scholars have defined national 'diplomatic style' as the 'totality of a nation's characteristic manner of conducting its foreign relations' (cit. in Krakau, 1984). Style has also been conceptualised as the 'product of the unfolding of the total national historical experience, and of its impact on the perceptions and actions of decision-makers', a specific style is therefore related to the 'characteristic modes of perceiving, interpreting, and acting upon this world' (Krakau, 1984).

Indeed, diplomatic style is a potent factor that has a significant influence on a state's external relations (Yoshimatsu, 2010, p. 400). In reference to the Great Powers, Nicolson wrote that the marked differences in the theory and practice of the several Great Powers are 'caused by variations in national character, traditions and requirements' (Nicolson, 1963, p.127). In this sense, diplomatic style refers to the diplomatic approach that characterises the ways in which a state manages its diplomatic relations and the diplomatic

strategy adopted in diplomatic negotiations and bargaining. Diplomatic style is particularly an interesting factor in assessing Chinese diplomacy and EU diplomacy. In the case of China, some scholars believe that a 'great power style' characterises China's economic diplomacy. China's way of using economic means to achieve China's foreign policy objectives and economic benefits is closely associated with the 'responsible great power' (负责任大国) status that China hopes to attain (Jiang, 2011), and that China's diplomatic strategy is faced with a dilemma between the 'pragmatic pursuit' of economic interests and the 'strategic pursuit' of political interests (Jiang, 2011). They highlight the constraints imposed by domestic political institutions in China and that the relevant diplomatic style adopted by China is a major factor that have influenced China's external relations. Others purport that China's implementation of a 'pragmatic diplomacy' style aims to improve its policy credibility on the international stage. The case of China's active participation in the international negotiations on climate change reveals China's diplomatic style with dual characteristics of both a developing country and a developed country (Ye and Zhang, 2013, p. 288). China works with major powers to maintain its involvement in multilateral climate negotiations, and also coordinates closely with developing countries, playing the role of a bridge builder between the developed and developing countries. The EU's way of diplomacy has been conceptualised as a *sui genris* style due to its unique institutional composition by being less than a nation-state, but more than an international organisation (Carlsnaes, Sjursen and White, 2004). The diplomacy of the EU 'def[ies] simple categorisations'; the EU is more than 'a traditional international organisation, yet less than a federal state in the making' (Jönsson and Hall, 2005, p.151). The EU is better understood as a process, and 'supranationality' and 'multilevel governance' are important in the EU developing into a diplomatic persona. Branding it 'polylateral diplomacy', the EU's diplomacy entail a broad and complex participation of actors in EU policy processes

(Jönsson and Hall, 2005).

The way in which diplomatic style manifests itself in diplomatic interactions is subject to cultural variation. In this sense, diplomatic style entails the cultural underpinnings and the ways in which parties relate to each other. In particular, scholars have stressed the informal and formal ways different parties adopt or favour to maintain the momentum of negotiations. For example, Kissinger viewed negotiation as the main instrument of diplomacy and defined diplomacy as a series of steps, merging into a continuum. Step-by-step diplomacy progresses through a series of interim agreements (Kissinger, 1994, p.197) Central to this Kissinger-style diplomacy was relying on creating backchannels to open new means of communication and the twin track negotiating and decision-making processes, as elaborated in his own words backchannels are ‘a way to explore the terrain, to avoid major deadlocks’ in diplomatic negotiations (Kissinger, 2011).

In diplomatic negotiations, style is often associated with the preference for either formal diplomacy or informal diplomacy by negotiation parties. Employing informal diplomatic efforts speaks to the view of diplomacy as not just about producing negotiated outcomes but also about influencing how others think (Sharp, 2009). Actors involved in negotiations are not always negotiating agreements based on ‘fixed preferences’, they are involved in ‘an ongoing dialogue that may shape and even change preferences based on normative beliefs’ (Sharp, 2009, p.5). In this light, maximising track two diplomacy entails influencing thinking and conceptions of interest.

The influence of track two diplomacy in relationship-building is more about ‘the psychological dynamics of discussions’ in that they are primarily about ‘long-term

socialisation and the generation of new ideas' (Kaye, 2007, p.3) and track two efforts contribute to 'conflict management, tension reduction, confidence building' (Kaye, 2007, p.4). Informal diplomacy provides the opportunities to clarify the basic purposes of the talks in a low key manner. For example, track two dialogues on regional security are 'less about producing diplomatic breakthroughs than socialising an influential group of elites to think in cooperative ways', track two dialogues can 'alter views about the value of cooperation with other regional actors, even if attitudes toward those actors remain generally negative' (Kaye, 2007, p. xi).

Moreover, the influence of style in diplomacy is embedded in the cultural subtleties of international negotiations. As diplomacy is fundamentally a human activity, diplomatic style is reflective of the society being represented, and socio-cultural, economic and political influences play a role in determining the defining characteristics or trademarks that define a country's diplomatic style. For example, typical Chinese values, such as 'face saving' (面子) influences Chinese negotiation behaviour and have become part of the factors influencing how Chinese bargaining evolves throughout the successive stages of negotiations. Chinese negotiators are relatively more concerned with relational dimensions of negotiations, such as negotiator satisfaction and perceptions and avoid extreme bargaining strategies (Chuah, Hoffmann and Larner, 2014, p. 204). This aspect of diplomatic style is particularly important as diplomacy deals with 'culturally diverse groups by means of interactions and negotiations' (Bolewski, 2008, p. 146). As 'different cultural groups communicate differently, the culture of a negotiation party influences its negotiation style' in decision-making (Bolewski, 2008, p. 146). Scholars argue that positive emotions during the talks have a positive impact on the negotiations (Filzmoser, Hippmann and Vetschera, 2016). The mood of the talks determines to what extent

diplomatic interactions are pre-cooked or could yield substantial progress in diplomatic relationship-building. In this sense, different diplomatic styles indicate a particular character of diplomatic interactions. Crucially, it is the interaction between diplomatic styles that influence the negotiation process. As Rathbun argued, 'diplomatic styles interact to create a certain spirit of negotiation' (Rathbun, 2014). When 'the spirit of negotiation tends toward value claiming, we can expect a lower likelihood of mutually beneficial agreement, while value creation allows for the possibility of both sides finding agreement' (Rathbun, 2014).

In the negotiation scholarship, style refers to 'the barriers to international dialogue in diplomatic practice that national differences erect' (Hare, 2015). For example, 'cultural differences between parties are a central issue to most diplomatic negotiations', in this negotiation context, culture 'affects how states are organised, their economic success, and thought processes' (Cohen, 1997; Hare, 2015). Diplomatic style, in this sense, relates to how different countries treat their discussions of the same issue, Cohen argues that there is a difference between 'low-context culture' and 'high context culture' that matters in diplomatic negotiations. For instance, China being a high-context culture 'favours stating Chinese positions and requirements before the negotiations begin' in contrast to the US as a low-context country uses metaphors to 'suggest they aim for clear outcomes' (Hare, 2015). Cohen argues that 'difference in cultures also impact the implementation of agreements achieved through negotiation' and that 'for high-context societies, an agreement is seen as a provisional step on a never-ending journey, yet another move in an open-ended relationship' (Cohen, 1997, p.201). Scholars have also discovered that 'no state adopts the same approach to every type of negotiation' (Hare, 2015). This stylistic variation is important to understand in relation to the contrast between the style in which

states negotiate trade and the style in which they negotiate climate change.

In relation to the importance of style, ‘interpersonal interactions with foreign publics are critical to public diplomacy (Buckle, 2012; Tam, 2019)’, the relationship-centred approach to public diplomacy stresses the role of diplomat to ‘build and cultivate relationships to increase trust, control mutuality, satisfaction, and commitment between a country and its global public’. In terms of the building of relationship at interpersonal level between diplomats as human agents representing a country Hart underlined the relational continuation that the commitment to build and continue relationships are crucial (Eyal and Dailey, 2012; Tam, 2019).

By way of a summary, the three essential elements proposed above are interwoven in relationship-building and constitutively shape the process of diplomatic relationship-building. Understanding the constitutive effect of the three elements promises powerful insights into the processes of diplomatic engagement. The element of *structure* enables us to capture the fundamentals of diplomatic-relationship building – the actors and mechanisms in diplomatic interactions. The element of *substance* refers to the multiplicity of issues negotiated in diplomatic fora. The element of *style* enables us to examine the deeper human layer and social and cultural embeddedness of diplomatic interactions. The three elements of diplomatic relationship-building are conceptually distinct from one another, they constitutively reflect and affect the intensity of shared intentions in diplomatic interactions and influence the process of diplomatic relationship-building.

3.5 Theoretical model of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building

Based on the three essential elements in diplomatic relationship-building, the research develops a theoretical account of how the three elements can exert impact on shared intentions in the process of diplomatic relationship-building. Such a theory would allow us to uncover the characteristics of the actors, mechanisms, processes and intricacies woven in the fabric of diplomatic relations; and in the context of EU-China relations, to illuminate the diplomatic making of EU-China relations. In order to do so, the study generates a novel theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building that enables us to better capture and comprehend the complexity and intensity of diplomatic relationship-building, and to illuminate the dynamics of diplomatic relationship-building in EU-China relations. In the technical sense of the term, theoretical models 'not only fix the mesh of the nets that the analyst drags through the material in order to explain a particular action; they also direct the analyst to cast nets in select ponds, at certain depths, in order to catch the fish' (Allison and Zelikow, 1999, p.2). For the purpose of this study, the model of diplomatic relationship-building generates three propositions about the possible influence of the three essential elements of diplomatic relationship-building on the development of shared intentions in the process of EU-China relationship-building. The idea is to understand how EU-China relationship-building takes place, to assess the importance of the abovementioned elements in specific contexts of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building, and to provide a theoretical arsenal with which one can apply to assess the essential elements shaping EU-China relationship-building across policy areas. As comparing different issue-areas in which the EU and China constructs relations promises powerful insights into the ways in which EU-China relations is (and could be). Moreover, although the focus of the theoretical model is on the diplomatic relationship-building process between the EU and China, the core question it addresses and

related propositions are generic to the broader theoretical field of diplomatic theory, thus it is expected that the model can be applied to various relationship-building settings in international diplomacy, as can the scope of the model be extended to understand relations between other international actors.

As a constitutive theory, the model seeks not to establish the causal relations between shared intentions and the three elements, but to explain how the three elements exert impact on shared intentions in diplomatic relationship-building process. As explained in prior sections, in lieu of a causal explanation, a constitutive logic is more ideal to capture the three constitutive elements at play in the evolution of diplomatic relationship-building process. A constitutive framework allows us to not only explicate and evaluate the key elements of diplomatic relationship-building, but also provides a means of illuminating the potential effect of one element filtering through other elements in different policy areas or cases of diplomatic relationship-building. In light of this constitutive logic, the three essential elements – structure, substance and style – do not cause diplomatic relationship-building, rather they constitute and shape the process of diplomatic relationship-building. The development and varied intensity of shared intentions are vital to building diplomatic relationships. The philosophical lenses of shared intentions enable us to unearth the surface of the complex social phenomenon of diplomatic relationship-building. This theoretical approach to understanding diplomatic relationship-building more comprehensively encompasses the diversity of actors involved in diplomatic interactions, while addressing the multi-faceted conditions under which diplomatic relationship-building operates, and to apprehend the diplomatic styles of the actors involved in international affairs. The theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building is visualised below:

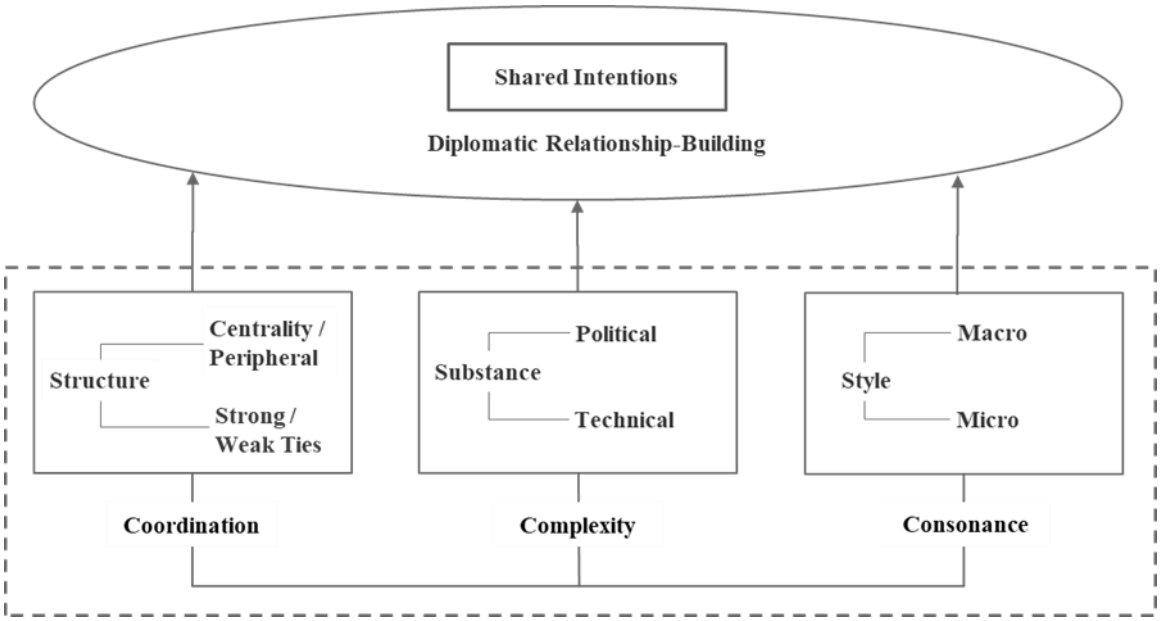


Figure 1 Theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building

Proposition 1:

Balanced structural coordination yields strong EU-China shared intentions and enhances the process of diplomatic relationship-building.

In essence, the structure of diplomatic relationship-building concerns the institutional actors and the mechanisms involved in diplomatic fora. The emphasis on diplomatic structure related to understanding international bargaining in terms of resources and capabilities of the parties around the negotiation table. The structural influence in the process of diplomatic relationship-building relates to the institutional configuration and dynamics in relationship-building. The complexity of the institutional structure denotes the coordination capacity for shared collective action. The institutional structure of institutional actors and mechanisms are an important driver of policy formulation and implementation, and can create a more or less conducive environment for diplomatic

relationship-building. It is reasonable to expect that the smaller the number of actors and mechanisms involved in diplomacy, the easier it should be to forge an agreement. A less complex institutional structure would be more amenable to sustain closer relations, while a more complex institutional structure could create bottlenecks in diplomatic interactions.

As diplomatic relationship-building is a complex process of interactions between many institutional actors, a focus on the structural brings to the fore the different responsibilities and influence of the multiplicity of actors in diplomatic relationship-building. The empowerment and influence of the institutional actors are related with informational advantages gained from the engagement channels in the relationship-building process. This structural dynamic in diplomatic negotiations unveils the competence and influence of individual institutions in the relationship-building process. Structure matters in the sense that it 'channels process in its multiple options' (Zartman, 1999, p.7). Institutional structures have important effects on power relations in negotiations (Zartman, 2016).

Through the lens of shared intentions, it is important to see whether the parties involved in diplomatic relationship-building have effective mechanisms of decision-making to advance their respective diplomatic objectives, and to develop ways for shared understanding and generate shared intentions. The institutional structure influences decision-making coordination and the development of shared intentions. 'All negotiations are asymmetrical, to a greater or lesser degree; there is no absolute equality in the real world' (Zartman, 2016). Complex structure requires negotiation parties to invest more time, resources, energy for more coordination and to achieve more shared understanding to build trust. As such it could be expected that weak and unbalanced coordination in the institutional structure underpinning diplomatic relationship-building constrains the

development of shared intentions. A balanced structural coordination facilitates shared intentions to forge in the process of diplomatic relationship-building. From the shared intentions perspective, the institutional ties serve as mechanisms for the circularity, or at its best, the strengthening of shared intentions.

The influence of structural coordination in EU-China relations is particularly potent. There is an inherent difference in the institutional government between the EU and China. China has a centralised governance system and the EU being a supranational entity has a *sui generis* governance system. Balanced structural coordination means greater capability to conclude negotiation agreement; however, unbalanced structural coordination may impair the smooth process of relationship-building, as coordination may be more difficult and may not be conducive to brokering an agreement. Thus structural coordination exerts impact on the development of shared intentions in diplomatic relationship-building process between the EU and China. It would be interesting to compare the institutional structure and associated institutional capacities for climate change action and trade negotiations in EU-China relations.

Proposition 2:

Alignment of political and technical substance generates strong EU-China shared intentions and enhances the process of diplomatic relationship-building.

A 'fundamental dimension of any negotiation is the number and nature of the issues under discussion (Odell, 2012). Diplomatic relationship-building is a process of constant negotiation and exchange of information and resources. The issues entailed in these exchanges exert influence on the relationship-building process (Zartman, 1999). The issues

discussed in diplomatic fora are negotiated politically and technically. This research highlights two characteristics of the issues to evaluate the effect of substance in diplomatic relationship-building: technical complexity and political salience. The substance element refers to the complex political salience and complex technicality of the issues under negotiation.

Complexity tests the relationship. The way in which complex substance exerts its influence in the process of diplomatic relationship-building manifests in either the gradual convergence or divergence of intentions. The degree of complexity denotes the intentions of parties during the relationship-building process. Issues that are of political salience, no matter if the issues fall under the category of low politics or high politics issues, can be important to the objectives of the negotiation. Politically salient issues touch upon core negotiation priorities and objectives and are usually considered to be more sensitive and difficult to handle than 'softer' marginal issues. It is possible to predict that these issues would take more time to dissipate disagreement to strengthen shared intentions, which could prolong the process of diplomatic relationship-building. The involvement of complex and interlinked issues implies a multitude of actors and mechanisms to be integrated into the relationship-building process, 'the interlinkages of issues may cause divergence in the parties understanding of issues, delay in finding equitable and durable solution (Raiffa, 1982). The more complex an issue is for both negotiating parties, the more likely a negotiation will involve multiple issues that need to be jointly resolved in order to reach an agreement, the greater the distance among the zone of agreement of negotiating parties, and thus the more difficult for relationship-building. If the degree of controversy and sources of disagreement is low and negotiating parties share similar goals, negotiating parties can reconcile differences more quickly, hence the conclusion of

agreement can be achieved more efficiently. Some scholars purport that ‘any negotiation in which states bargain over only one issue is a zero-sum bargaining setting, while negotiations with a greater number of issues raise the possibility that the negotiation is one that is positive-sum’ (Raiffa, 1982; McKibben, 2010).

If the issues are more technically and politically complex, the diplomatic talks would require more actors, more meetings to bring in more expertise to facilitate diplomatic relationship-building. The complexity is ‘both good and bad news’, as they ‘offer opportunities’ to realise ‘potential gains’ and avoid ‘confusion or deadlock’ that rely on the understanding from negotiators carefully crafting the ‘issue agenda’ (Devereaux, Lawrence, and Watkins, c2006). Moreover, the more numerous the institutional actors, the more diverging objectives and intentions exist between actors, the more difficult it should be to aggregate all the objectives involved into negotiating agreement. In this respect, multiple issues on the agenda may generate sources of disagreement and impede the overall diplomatic relationship-building process. For instance, trade and climate change talks are highly technical and political in nature, which involve a diversity of discussions on array of different issues. In the case of trade negotiations, the complexity of substance is manifest in the complex linkages of issues. As scholars have noted ‘economic interdependence and a globalized economy require policy coordination among countries to pursue domestic goals, the domestic agendas and international agendas have become increasingly linked’ (Haas, 1992). In a similar vein, international climate change issues involve the complex interplay of ‘long-term consequences of measures designed to address one of the many environmental issues under current consideration’ and short-term priorities. The exchange of resources and information in EU-China diplomatic interactions is considerable, the degree of controversy with regard to the nature of the issue may be

bargaining impediment; in contrast, converging objectives and priorities in the talks could foster shared understanding between the EU and China and generate further cooperation incentives. Shared intentions strengthen diplomatic bonds and facilitate collaborative activities. The more robust shared intentions are, the more robust is the relationship. On the contrary the more volatile shared intentions are, the more ephemeral is the relationship.

Proposition 3:

Consonance of diplomatic styles renders strong EU-China shared intentions and enhances the process of diplomatic relationship-building.

In this research, style denotes the intrinsic and distinctive qualities that characterise the diplomacy of the EU and China. To a certain extent, diplomatic style captures the constant in the dynamism of diplomatic relationship-building. This research distinguishes two levels of analysis to decipher the diplomatic styles of China and the EU. The first level of analysis is the 'macro-level analysis of diplomatic style' epitomised as the characteristics of the diplomatic strategies of China and the EU to the specific policy issue under consideration. The second level is the 'micro-level analysis of diplomatic style' manifest in patterns of diplomatic activities (Jefferson, 2016) and diplomatic techniques of communication and negotiation (Jönsson and Hall, 2005) in the process of diplomatic relationship-building. These two levels of analyses allow us to distil the distinctive key features that characterise the EU and China's conduct of diplomacy, and enable us to observe variation in EU and China diplomacies in different policy areas.

As the process of diplomatic relationship-building is essentially a process of the development of shared intentions, which entails a process of building trust, fostering

familiarity and establishing understanding between parties in diplomatic fora. This is especially interesting in terms of the stylistic factor at play in EU-China relations. Differences can be expected in the two levels of diplomatic styles of the EU and China, and could produce a series of expectation for the relationship-building process.

The macro-level understanding of diplomatic style relates to the diplomatic strategies of China and the EU vis-à-vis the issues under negotiation. Style reflects a nation's 'basic assumptions and beliefs about the world and its own role or place in it. National style conditions the nation's perceptions and judgments, the kinds of claims it advances to the world, as well as it manner of formulating and presenting and executing them' (Krakau, 1984). Stylistic similarities at the macro-level enable negotiation parties to form joint intentions more easily, and to obtain mutual responsiveness in their pursuit of joint commitment and perform joint activity more easily. Differences in diplomatic style at the macro-level may trigger interlocking intentions to fall apart during the negotiation processes. For example, it is reasonable to expect that there are variances in the EU's and China's diplomatic strategies in the fields of climate change and trade. The EU and China share the commitment to combat climate change (in the second case study of this research) and protect high-quality agricultural products and intellectual property (in the first case study of this research), because of this shared expectations about the ways in which decisions are taken, diplomatic relationships in these areas would be relatively easier to build. Consonance of diplomatic styles are conducive to producing deliverables and building relationships.

The micro-level understanding of diplomatic style is about patterns of communication and ways of pursuing diplomatic objectives in negotiations. The 'micro-level of diplomatic

style' relates to the core function of diplomacy – the way in which diplomatic communication is conducted manifest in diplomatic techniques of communication and negotiation (Jönsson and Hall, 2005) and patterns of diplomatic activities (Jefferson, 2016). The mico-level of diplomatic style is embedded in the cultural influence in cross-cultural diplomacy (Cohen, 2007). It is akin to the 'high-context' and 'low-context' negotiation styles that negotiation scholars have categorised, which is inherent in the European and China's ways of working, thus essential to understanding the dialogue between the two (Cohen, 2007). Diplomacy is 'a regulated process of communication' that involves communication between polities (Constantinou, 1996; Jönsson and Hall, 2005). The micro-aspect of diplomatic style highlights this communicative aspect of diplomacy. It also refers to 'certain preferred or characteristic modes of conduct which translate assumptions and principles – confronted with historical experience – into concrete policy behavior' (Krakau, 1984). In this respect, diplomatic style refers to the ways in which the EU and China relate to each other, and thus the way in which relationship-building is being made. This is about zooming into the micro-processes of diplomatic interactions to consider the political, cultural and social context the negotiator is embedded in, as cultural differences shape negotiation processes and outcomes (Faure, 1998; Odell, 2012). Cultural differences, if not understood, may impact negatively on the negotiation process (Schneider and Barsoux, 2003).

This micro-level understanding of diplomatic style involves the cultural disposition of negotiators bargaining strategies, such as the preference for formality or informality in the relationship-building process, and cultural factors play an important role in this analysis of diplomatic style. 'Bargaining strategies make difference to the negotiation process and outcome (Dür and Mateo, 2010). Stylistic differences imply parties process information

differently, regulate goals differently and react differently to conditions and situations in the process (Gelfred and Dyer, p.92). For instance, in low-context negotiation style information is likely to be transmitted directly and explicitly, while high-context negotiation style transmit information indirectly and implicitly. To maximise shared intentions, negotiators may need to adapt their styles to develop trust (Francis, 1991). There may be cultural differences on the degree of shared intentions which could have consequences for diplomatic relationship-building, greater dissonance may lead to longer negotiations. 'To generate joint gains negotiators must share enough information to understand each other's priorities and identify trade-offs and compatible issues' (Adair et al., 2004). Different communications styles may account for the way in which information is transmitted in diplomatic processes. Similar ways of communication render it easier to identify trade-offs and potential zones of agreement.

In the context of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building, China favours formality and protocol in diplomacy while the EU's approach may be more informal in communication. If there are only formal channels of engagement, the talks are likely to be stiff, and not conducive to developing the relationship; while a blend of informal channels may lighten the mood during the negotiations, especially when discussions reach stalemate or when there is a need to build more trust and confidence in both parties. China-style diplomacy is generally centralised and hierarchical, while the EU style is more inclusive and power is relatively distributed. Diplomatic style understood in this light is a very important element in relationship-building as it refers to the type of relationship-building in negotiations breakthroughs and delivering results. This important concept of style enables us to identify the characteristics of EU and Chinese diplomacies, and affords a more refined understanding of the challenges and opportunities in EU-China diplomatic

relationship-building.

Recognising these differences or similarities are instrumental to attaining robust diplomatic relationship-building, as Bruno Latour purported 'Diplomacy cannot begin until we suspend our assumptions about what does or does not count as difference. There are more ways than one to differ – and thus more than one way to agree – in the end' (Latour, 2002). It is possible to hypothesise that consonance between EU-style diplomacy and China-style diplomacy may enhance EU-China shared intentions and facilitate diplomatic relationship-building. Dissonance between the diplomatic styles of the EU and China render it easier to reach more compromises and lee-way in negotiations and relationship-building. While differences in EU-style diplomacy and China-style diplomacy could impede relationship-building, as the differences provides less less-way and compromises for diplomatic relationship-building. This working definition of diplomatic style connects the micro-level of diplomatic activities, including *inter alia*, diplomatic negotiations, formal and informal interactions and associated activities, and the *macro-level* of the EU and China's diplomatic strategy and policy approaches to the issues being negotiated, which may provide a new lens to discover the deeper, cultural, and inherently relational nature of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter proposed a new way of theorising diplomatic relationship-building by developing a theoretical model to capture the essential building blocks and the fundamental *sine qua non* of diplomatic relationship-building. In lieu of the conventional interest-based and value-based theoretical models in competing paradigms of international

relations scholarship, the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building provides an alternative pathway to understanding the process of diplomatic relationship-building. The model identifies three essential elements – structure, substance and style – to trace and examine the process of diplomatic relationship-building. The focus on the three elements allows us to derive three expectations regarding the effect of the three elements on the development of shared intentions in the process of diplomatic relationship-building. The theoretical model posits that a balanced structural coordination, alignment of negotiation substance and consonance of diplomatic styles could strengthen EU-China shared intentions and enhance EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

This constitutive theory of diplomatic relationship-building not only enables us to capture the dynamics of the process of diplomatic relationship-building, but it also has the possibility to shed light on their varying degrees of influence on relationship-building in international diplomacy. Such a theoretical model promises theoretically enlightening and empirically justifiable insights to unveil the multi-actor, multifaceted and multi-level EU-China relationship, and to illuminate the enigma of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

By way of chapter conclusion, the model of diplomatic relationship-building provides a theoretical arsenal to further the exploration of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building to which this thesis is dedicated. The next chapter formulates an associated analytical methodology to enable the operationalisation of the diplomatic relationship-building model in the systematic investigation of two case studies of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

Chapter 4 Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter details the research methodology employed in the thesis to elucidate the diplomatic relationship-building process of EU-China relations. As a novel departure from traditional research methods in diplomatic studies, the methodology advanced here is a combination of qualitative techniques and social network analysis (SNA). First, this chapter explains the relevance and importance of social network analysis for diplomatic studies. It elucidates the relatively underexplored terrain in the academic literature on employing social network analysis in diplomatic studies. Second, the chapter presents the conceptual tools from social network analysis that are pertinent to integrate into diplomatic studies, in order to capture and assess diplomatic relationship-building. Third, this chapter presents the procedure for mapping and analysing EU-China relations by detailing the step-by-step process taken in the research. Forth, the chapter explains the logic of the selection of the two case studies in this thesis, and discusses data collection and fieldwork.

4.2 Social network analysis and diplomatic studies

From a social science vantage point, a methodology is a theory of how research does or should proceed (Harding, 1987, p.3). The 'appropriate selection of research methods cannot be divorced from a researcher's theoretical concern' and one's 'conception of knowledge building' (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, c2006, pp. 4-5). As such for the purpose of this research, the choice of methodological tools has to reckon with the theoretical propositions of the model of diplomatic relationship-building in chapter three to illuminate

the relationship-building process between the EU and China, which amounts to the dual adoption of social network analytical tools and qualitative methods in political sceince. The relevance and importance of social network analysis to diplomatic studies are intrinsically associated with the development of relational thinking in international affairs in general, and network thinking in particular. The idea is that interactions among states, regions and actors at the global level take place within different networks, the quality and quantity of the relations within the networks determine the flow of information and influence. This network form of relational reasoning in international relations is epitomised and arguably revolutionised by the concept of 'network society' developed by Castellas, who argued that 'network society' best captures the social and political dynamics of the contemporary period, which is characterised by global interconnection and the emergence of a globally interdependent social structure (Castells, 2004).

Scholars have purported that the basic characteristics of international relations are about interdependencies and are fundamentally relational. To a certain extent international relations are about networks (Mintz and Russett, 2004; Maoz, 2012). 'Networks of relations' among states are reshaping the key features of international relations in the modern era (Keohane and Nye, 2001). These 'relational phenomenon' are underpinned by crucial relational factors such as power, interaction and trust (Lazer, 2011). This is important in the sense that power generates from being well connected in the 'emerging networked world' of the 21st century, and that 'the state with the most connections will be the central player, able to set the global agenda and unlock innovation and sustainable growth' (Slaughter, 2009). Some scholars have analogised the international system to a 'global communication network' (Small and Singer 1973), while others have elaborated on a 'relational paradigm' to understand today's world and the necessity of building

‘relationship diplomacy’ (Saunders, 2005).

Echoing this networked characteristic of international relations, social network analysis has been transplanted into the field of diplomatic studies. The network-based view to diplomacy represents a departure from traditional state-to-state view of diplomacy that is better suited to understand the current age of a ‘new model of diplomacy’. As Hocking contends this new model of diplomacy ‘rests on a fundamentally different picture of how diplomacy works in the twenty-first century. It recognises the importance of policy networks in managing increasingly complex policy environments through the promotion of communication, dialogue and trust’ (Hocking, 2008). And with ever more complex and multifaceted policy agendas, a growing diversity of actors is increasingly populating the diplomatic milieu, in particular with the increasing participation of the private sector (Hocking, 2004). There exists a trend of ‘multistakeholder diplomacy’ with an increasing involvement of business and civil society groups in diplomatic decision making-process (Kurbalija and Katrandjiev, 2006). Locked into a web of interactions are governments, business sectors, civil societies and non-governmental organisations, with the emergence of a more diffuse and pluralistic network model of diplomacy that is different from the classical model of ‘club diplomacy’ (Heine, 2013). The social network approach changes the dynamics of studying international diplomacy. While traditional diplomacy focuses on state-centred interactions, a network approach breaks the boundaries by incorporating new actors and new mechanisms into the analysis which better reflects the reality of current diplomacy, as ‘international policy is increasingly conducted through complex policy networks’ (Hocking, 2008).

Diplomatic scholars have increasingly come to embrace the network idea of diplomacy.

Due to the increasingly complex diplomatic interactions among a plethora of stakeholders, diplomacy is becoming more and more about 'complexity management' (Heine, 2013). 'Network diplomacy' is gradually replacing the traditional 'club model' of diplomacy marked by solely government-level diplomatic interactions. Metzl stated that the shift from hierarchical to networked diplomacy means that diplomacy is increasingly intersecting with other sectors at all levels, engaging in a global dialogue to effectively and efficiently solve global cross-border issues. This network diplomacy is broader than traditional diplomacy and better equipped to respond to short-term crises and long-term challenges (Metzl, 2001). The network approach to diplomacy based on dialogue and engagement between and among state and non-state actors have replaced the traditional approaches in diplomacy (Melissen, 2011, p. 22).

Traditionally anchored as a methodology for the discipline of sociology (Freeman, 2004), social network analysis has emerged as a useful methodology in IR scholarship to facilitate our understanding of international relations (Hafner-Burton *et al.*, 2009). The value of employing social network analysis in the study of international relations has been increasingly emphasised (Hafner-Burton, Kahler and Montgomery, 2009). The underlying logic and concepts of social network analysis match very closely the basic characteristics of international relations (Maoz, 2012, p. 250). This is because social network analysis encompasses concepts and analytical measures that are expressed in terms of 'relational concepts of processes' (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). SNA offers a means of effectively analysing 'the interdependence and flows of influence among individuals, groups, and institutions' (Ward *et al.*, 2011). Social network analysis approaches are tailored to 'the evaluation of relationships and designed for grappling with the complexity of relational phenomena' (Gross and Jansa, 2016). Social network analysis is thus an ideal

representational, conceptual and methodological tool for the analysis of international relations (Hafner-Burton *et al*., 2009).

In essence, social network analysis provides a framework for understanding how complex relational processes work (Freeman 2004). This relational perspective on social, political, and economic action and phenomenon has been sparingly utilised by IR scholars. In International Relations, social network analysis has helped to address questions relating to 'the role of actors, ideas and interests in policy-making processes' (Bressers, and Jr., 1998; Howlett, 2002). SNA has been employed to organise and examine actors and institutions into identifiable sets of policy-relevant interactions, which has 'facilitated policy analysis providing a model of the structure and operation of policy processes which governments and policy actors can use to better design and affect outcomes' (Bressers, and Jr., 1998; Howlett, 2002). Furthermore, network scholars argue the allure of social network analysis lies in its ability to capture and analyse different patterns of interaction. By conceptualising policy making as 'a process involving a diversity of actors who are mutually interlinked' (Adam and Kriesi, 2007), the network perspective focuses on relationships between actors, and prioritises the examination of processes and relations. The configuration of network matters, and the relational characteristics influence political outcomes (Knoke, 2011). Network analysis offers a set of methods to identify and measure the structural properties of networks, and thus offers a broader understanding of 'how forms of structure may constrain and enable the nodes embedded in the network' (Hafner-Burton *et al.,* 2009). The characteristics of a network are linked with the diversity of network members, the efficiency of information flow and the robustness of the network (Leifeld and Schneider, 2012).

Social network analysis scholarship affords a far more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of social processes in international politics (Maoz, 2012, p.248). The network approach sheds important light on the distribution of power, the construction of interests and identities and the dynamics of interaction (Hall, 1986, p. 19-20). The analytical value of social network analysis 'lies in the fact that it conceptualises policy making as a process involving a diversity of actors who are mutually interdependent' and explains 'how exogenous and endogenous factors are connected in determining policy outcomes and change' (Silke and Kriesi, c2007, p.146). Such a relational approach may enable us to rethink actors and the importance of social positions in international relations (Nexon and Pouliot 2013). A social network perspective promises a unique perspective to capture the dialogue and interactions among the variety of actors that are involved in the diplomatic practices of relationship-building. A network analysis of diplomatic relationship-building could enhance our understanding of the spatial and temporal dynamics of decision-making in diplomatic relationship-building process.

However, despite the added value of employing social network analysis to study relational dynamics, the use of social network analysis in the study of diplomacy only consist of a very small fraction of the research. Existing scholarship do not explain the operational technicalities in the applicability of social network analysis for developing a better understanding of diplomacy. Existing studies employing social network analysis lack 'an adequate connection between theoretical concepts and sound methodological operationalisation', in that 'those advancing the methodology often lack knowledge in social science, whereas those employing the network approach in social science often do not use its formal techniques or do not use it correctly' (as cited in Silke and Kriesi, c2007, p.147). The challenge lies in employing social network analysis to capture anew the

complex nature of diplomatic relationship-building, and to revivify the multifaceted, multi-actor and multi-dimensional diplomatic milieu. The potential of social network analysis in the study of diplomacy and practically operationalising social network analysis is yet to be fully explored.

4.3 Navigating social network analysis

In order to maximise the strong potential of social network analysis in providing insights about the processes of diplomatic relationship-building, this section further explains the methodological design of navigating social network analysis in researching EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. There are two basic elements in social network analysis the nodes and ties in a network (Wassermann and Faust 1994). Accordingly, the operationalisation of social network analysis in this thesis centres on these two fundamental attributes of social network analysis. As social network analysis scholars have purported 'the fundamental difference between a social network explanation and a non-network explanation of a process is the inclusion of concepts and information on relationships among unites in a study' (Wasserman and Faust, 1994, p.6). Social network analysis valorises particularly the interconnectivity or the relational links that comprise a network and the nodes connected via the ties within the network (Wasserman and Faust, 1994; Maoz, 2012). With this distinctive focus, social network analysis contains a set of analytical tools pertinent to assess diplomatic relationship-building.

The following sections will explain the SNA conceptual tools pertinent to be transplanted into the analysis of decision-making in diplomatic studies. It employs these conceptual tools to generate a methodology that incorporates SNA conceptual tools to the analysis of

diplomatic decision-making in a systemic manner, to offer new insights into the study of diplomatic relationship-building in general, and EU-China diplomatic relationship-building in particular. At its core, social network analysis is a science of interactions. In reference to the essential three elements of diplomatic relationship-building detailed in the theoretical chapter, it is believed that the operationalisation of social network analysis in researching EU-China diplomatic relationship-building can complement conventional approaches within the field of IR to further our understanding of the processes of diplomatic relationship-building.

4.3.1 Centrality

To facilitate the analysis of the first element of structure in EU-China diplomatic relationship-building, the core concept that the study borrows from social network analysis scholarship is *centrality*. A prominent concept developed by Freeman (1979) to assess the structural importance of an actor in a network, the concept of centrality takes into consideration the structure in which an actor is embedded. It illustrates how central or important nodes are in a specific network. Centrality refers to a property of an individual node or groups of nodes' position in a network. According to network scholars, 'a fundamental axiom of social network analysis is the concept that structure matters' and 'a node's characteristics depend in part on its position in the network structure' (Borgatti *et al.*, 2009, p. 893). The importance of a certain node lies in the fact that a large number of ties in the network involve the node; or a node may be highly central by virtue of being well positioned to control the flow of information in a network (Borgatti *et al.* 2013, p. 164). At the nodal level, degrees of centrality – whether the node is highly connected, central or peripheral, or whether others are dependent on the node for access – is also related to the evaluation of the node's status and power within the network. For example,

actors' location within networks of information and resource exchange affect their abilities to achieve both individual and collective objectives (Knoke 1994). Centrality indicates the relative importance or prominence of nodes in a network based on information about the nodes in the network.

From a diplomatic studies perspective, the analytical value of centrality relates to how well positioned an institutional actor is in the network. In the decision-making process of diplomacy, central institutional actors can be interpreted as being prominent, influential, gatekeepers, or having great authority, control, visibility, prestige and power amongst others. Central institutional actors may provide certain institutions with opportunities to influence others and receive flows of information, support and material resources. As social network analysis scholars purport, the 'centrality' is linked with the power in determining events, and the importance of knowing who is central when one needs to get something done (Krackhardt, 1992). In this view, centrality is a source of opportunities and advantage. The more central an institution is, the better the institutional actor is integrated in the network, the more facility the institution has regarding collecting relevant information and influencing the diplomatic decision-making process. The institution with high centrality has greater leverage in the network and can be most influential in the diplomatic relationship-building process. The power of institutional actors lies in their unique access to information and their ability to shape the agenda in order to influence negotiated outcomes (Elgström and Jönsson, 2004). In diplomatic networks, actors with high degree centrality have better and more direct access to information and have considerable potential for framing the relationship-building process (Maoz *et al.* 2006).

In the case of EU-China relations, the concept of centrality enables us to identify the

influential institutional actors in building EU-China relations. The indication of centrality offers a more nuanced view of the importance of institutions in EU-China relations. A social network-based approach to examining diplomacy is fundamentally a relational approach that does not eliminate conventional state representatives in diplomatic practices but understand them as embedded in new forms of interaction with a variety of other stakeholders (Lynch, 2015, p.168). The identification of the significant institutional actors inside the network may help to uncover an innovative approach to successful cooperation and policy-coordination between the EU and China. To examine the different institutions involved in EU-China diplomacy, the measurement of nodal centrality is primarily based on the competence and role of the institutions enshrined in the EU treaties on the EU side, and Chinese legislation on the functions of various institutions in policy-making. The EU Treaties 'set the boundaries for the EU's foreign policy actors by conferring upon the institutions specific powers and by detailing the decision-making process' (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2014). In this light, the concept of centrality enables us to unveil the key institutional actors in the EU-China network and also, in some cases, the discrepancy between an institutional actor's perceived influence (by other institutional actors) and the actual influence the institutional actor has in the negotiation process. For example, it is reasonable to expect that China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) plays the central role in EU-China relations, however the case study of trade negotiations may reveal MOFA's relatively marginal role compared to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM)'s role in the negotiations. On the European side, the European Parliament has an increasingly important role throughout the negotiations and in the diplomatic relationship-building process. These empirical findings are detailed in the two case study chapters.

4.3.2 Strong and weak ties

The second network concept that the study integrates to examine the structural element of EU-China relations is *strong and weak ties.* These concepts illustrate the quality of the ties in the network which are key elements of network properties (Knoke and Yang, 2008). According to social network analysis scholars, the quality of interactions empowers some nodes in the networks and disempowers others. Strong and weak ties illuminate how nodes can seek to exert influence by using the network to mobilise resources and by influencing the relationships that exist within the network. In this light, the embedded logic of interdependence in social network analysis enables us to better reveal the cooperation patterns and the relational dynamism that underpin diplomatic relationship-building. Using social network analysis, some scholars have emphasised the importance of the 'multiple, direct and interdependent interactions' in the structural characteristics of an organisation, and 'the complex array of multiple and interdependent relationships existing in stakeholder environments' (Rowley, 1997). Moreover, from a social network analysis perspective, tie strength relates to information and knowledge transfer in a network (Hansen, 1999, 2002). There are generally two types of information exchanges carried by the ties: technical information exchange and political and strategic information exchange, both serving different purposes (Leifeld and Schneider, 2012). Strong ties promote the transfer of complex information, while weak ties promote the transfer of simple information. The examination of the quality of ties in a network may reveal how actors within the network disseminate information and policy-specific knowledge, and how they might foster trust and shape the negotiation process in EU-China relations.

In the context of diplomatic studies, tie strength has the potential to further reveal the quality of the institutional mechanisms connecting the institutional actors in diplomatic

relationship-building process. The metrics for examining tie strength are twofold: 1) The level of formality of the interactions between the institutions and 2) The frequency of the interactions between the institutions. First, SNA studies have inferred that nodes that interact through both informal and formal channels form strong ties characterised by trust and longevity (Zaharna, Arsenault and Fisher, 2013); whereas, weak ties indicate the nodes in the network only interact through formal channels rendering a rather stiff relationship-building process. Translated into diplomatic studies, strong and weak ties indicate the interplay of formal and informal diplomacy. According to SNA scholars, one of the main advantages of 'network thinking' is that they allow informal inter-organisational coordination, which avoids problems associated with hierarchy and representation, and facilitates the development of trust and exchange of information (Chisholm 1989). The strength of ties affect how easily knowledge and resources are being transferred in the network (Adam and Kriesi 2007). According to Wasserman and Faust, nodes may be linked through their joint participation in social activities or by their common membership in organisations (Wasserman and Faust 1994, pp.291-343). Social network analysis enables us to detect patterns of formal and informal relations within a social space (De Nooy 2003), and allows us to grasp the structural patterns of nodes involved in the policy processes, going beyond formal institutional settings (Scholz and Wang 2006).

Second, examining the frequency of interactions between the institutional actors could further unveil the strength of the relationship between the institutional actors, and can help explain different diplomatic channels of engagement and policy outcomes. The metaphorical description of networks indicate that 'regular communication and frequent exchange of information lead to the establishment of stable relationships between actors

and to the coordination of their mutual interests' (Adam and Kriesi, c 2007, p. 129). The key attribute of social network analysis lies in its emphasis on relational embeddedness, which stresses the importance of tidal relations. Frequent interaction can lead to effective communication, and encourage stronger commitment to the relationship, and affect the motivation and intentions of the parties involved to maintain balanced relationships. Strong ties facilitate the formation of trust, which may further ease the transfer of knowledge in a network (Reagans and McEvily, 2003, p.244). The SNA concepts of strong and weak ties, which measure the quality of the ties in the network, suggest that the diplomatic relationship-building process is not merely power-driven but also resource-dependent. This is another important contribution social network analysis brings to the examination of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

As social network analysis emphasise the dialectical interdependence amongst nodes in the network (Kammel and Zyla, 2013). From a diplomatic studies perspective, strong and weak ties may reveal how information flows and how institutional actors pool expertise effectively in diplomatic relationship-building process. Complex negotiations require various stakeholders to get involved and a large amount of meetings to push forward the agenda, which would result in a network populated with many actors and ties. Relational ties between the nodes are channels for 'flow' of material and nonmaterial resources (Wasserman and Faust 1994). A network could be composed of weakly held-together nodes with rare or little means to build shared intentions; a network could be composed of nodes interacting frequently thereby facilitating the building of shared intentions. The more frequent different actors in the networks communicate and connect, the more information flows, and mutual understanding and shared intentions may be easier to generate. A more balanced coordination among the ties in the network may be more

conducive to efficient collective action than a less balanced coordination structure. By navigating the abovementioned conceptual tools of social network analysis, one can sharpen the analysis of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building which will be further advanced in a three-step strategy explained below.

4.4 A three-step process

As 'theory and empirical work cannot productively exist in isolation' (Brady and Collier, 2010, p.113), a powerful research design of qualitative studies consists of 'appropriately marshalling all the thick description and rich contextualisation' to 'evaluate a specific theory or hypothesis' (King, Keohane and Verba, 2010, p.122). In line with the theoretical chapter's propositions regarding the three essential elements of diplomatic relationship-building, a three-step process was employed to conduct the analysis of the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. An eclecticism of multiple methods underpins the methodology employed in this thesis, entailing the application of SNA and complemented by utilising qualitative techniques of discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews. Since 'every known empirical or analytical research design and technique has limitations as well as strengths. For this reason, using multiple methods offers the best chance for valid answers' (Odell and Tingley, 2013). The eclecticism of social network analysis and discourse analysis to examine diplomatic relationship-building are for the following three reasons.

First, the examination of diplomatic relationship-building is characteristic to the qualitative paradigm of social science research. Qualitative approaches are 'nonstatistical approaches that tend to be more textually based, often used to gain an understanding of underlying

reasons and motivations for social phenomenon' (Dunn and Neumann, 2016). The practice of 'qualitative research is reflexive and process driven, ultimately producing culturally situated and theory-enmeshed knowledge through an ongoing interplay between theory and methods, researcher and researched' (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, c2006, p.5). Second, the diplomatic relationship-building process between the EU and China could be well explored from discourse analysis in the context of the broader 'linguistic turn' in social sciences. The concept of discourse derives from the conceptualisation of Norman Fairclough as 'a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning' (1992, p.64).

Discourse analysis entails 'an examination of how and why things appear the way they do, and how certain actions become possible' (Dunn and Neumann, 2016). Discourse analysis is 'best suited for answering 'how' or 'how-possible' questions. It focuses on social form and the general effects thereof rather than on specific outcomes' (Dunn and Neumann, 2016). Moreover, discourse analysis 'draws our attention to how options and the larger possibilities of action get established. Doing so allows for greater understanding of the process and interactions within the social realm' (Dunn and Neumann, 2016). Thus, discourse analysis is ideally suited for the examination of diplomatic relationship-building processes, driven by mainly two categories of discursive interrogation. As Dunn and Neumann suggest, on one level, analysis can be conducted on 'official' discourse, which are the texts 'by agents that society generally imbues with political power and significance', these could include 'speeches by political leaders and official state documents'. On another level, discourse analysis 'can investigate the broader category of texts produced by socially recognised experts and scholars' (Dunn and Neumann, 2016). Discourse analysis is only feasible if the researcher 'have access to the categories of

discursive data', which leads to the third reason, the adoption of interview method in this research.

Interviews allow us to 'gather information to generate detailed, holistic descriptions, capture varying perspectives, discuss processes, unearth competing interpretations of events, identify the micro foundations of macro patterns, and frame hypotheses' (Kapiszewski, MacLean and Read, 2015, p.190; Weiss, 1994, pp.9-11). Information 'gained through interviewing can help to corroborate or fill gaps in information from written sources or formal accounts, identify different points of view, garner first-hand and behind-the-scenes knowledge, and learn about underlying dynamics' (Kapiszewski, MacLean and Read, 2015, p.204). The use of interview analysis 'can often be profitably combined – and mixed with other forms of data collection' (Kapiszewski, MacLean and Read, 2015, p. 193). Based on the value of the qualitative and social network analytical methods, a three-step process is developed to mesh the different tools in the research to distil the constitutive elements in the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. Each step aims at a distinct objective that requires different methodological techniques to achieve them.

First Step: Mapping diplomatic structure

The first step is using social network analysis methodology to assess the structure undergirding EU-China relations, which entails mapping the institutional actors and institutional mechanisms in the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. According to social network analysis scholarship, to comprehend the social phenomenon under examination, it is more conducive to map and analyse the nodes and the system of ties among the various nodes and the ways in which these relational patterns shape actor's

activity, decision-making and eventually the outcome of the collective action (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). To this end, the first step was to localise the nodes (institutional actors) and identify their functions in EU-China diplomatic relationship-building process. For the purpose of this study, the nodes constituting the network of EU-China relations are the institutions. This is because with regard to key policy making, formal organisations and institutions rather than individuals stand in the forefront of politics (Knoke *et al.,* 1996). Moreover, the development of EU-China relations is underpinned by an increasing institutionalisation over the past decades (Algeirie, 2002). It is the institutional actors who play a key role in shaping diplomacy. This research thus views the institutional actors as the most suitable level of analysis to open the 'black box' of EU-China relations, and focus on the institutional mechanisms by which the actors interact in the EU-China network for the analysis of the structure underpinning EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

Analysing the structure of EU-China relations entails mainly the analysis of the institutional actors and the institutional mechanisms by which they interact. To delineate the boundaries of the EU-China network, the study borrows techniques developed by social network scholars termed 'decisional methods' referring to the fact that the members constituting the network are the institutional actors that participate in 'making or influencing the collectively binding policy decisions' for the network (Galaskiewicz and Wasserman, 1994, p.280). This identification method has the advantage of achieving 'closure on a final membership list with reduced possibilities for serious omission or erroneous inclusion' (Knoke 1994). With this in mind, the identification of the institutional actors and mechanisms in EU-China relations was achieved through consultation of the existing studies on EU-China relations and interview data. In particular, the research utilised social network analysis conceptual tool of 'centrality' to identify and examine the

most important institutional actors, and social network analysis conceptual tools of ‘strong and weak ties’ to identify and assess EU-China institutional mechanisms. To ensure precision, consultation of secondary sources was employed to cross-check the accuracy of information gathered through interviews with stakeholders regarding institutional actors and the mechanisms involved in EU-China diplomatic relationship-building process, so as not to omit nor include irrelevant institutional nodes and ties in the network structure. Social network analysis techniques provides a ‘visualisation’ of the central and peripheral institutional actors of the institutional structure underpinning EU-China relations and the quality of the ties through which the actors are connected. This presents a novel way to capture the ever-increasing complexity of EU-China relations, and enable us to delineate and assess the configuration of the institutional network involved in the making of EU-China relations.

Second Step: Decoding diplomatic substance

The second step is dedicated to examining the substance negotiated in the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. This stage of analysis relied primarily on discourse analysis in political science to grasp the development of the negotiations. Substance through the prism of diplomatic studies is about the complexity of the issues under negotiation in diplomatic fora. The decoding of diplomatic substance in the process of diplomatic relationship-building is akin to the ‘intellectual effort’ of the ‘elaborate venture in ‘thick description’’ (Geertz, 1973, p.6), consisting of the researcher immersing oneself in the case, to construct the ‘chronological narrative’ that enables one to understand the ‘basic outlines of case’ (George and Bennett, 2005). This mode of operation is analogous to the craft of historian piecing together the puzzle of the story. The objective was to reconstruct the process of the negotiations as close to the unfolding of

real-time EU-China diplomacy as possible. The reconstitution of the negotiations started from extensive consultation of secondary sources on the cases and gradually acquiring in-depth semi-structured interviews, as well as the newly disclosed minutes, the archives of the cases and various other documented evidence regarding the two selected cases.

Furthermore, decoding substance of the talk entailed 'transforming a descriptive explanation for a case into an explanation that adequately reflects the theoretical framework' (George and Bennett, 2005). The research employed discourse analysis to analyse the data accumulated over extensive fieldwork in Europe and China from 2015 to 2019. Interview data, negotiation minutes and secondary sources were invaluable to not only gain first-hand knowledge of the development of the EU-China negotiations, but also to cross-validate and cross-check the information.

Third Step: Unveiling diplomatic style

The third step is dedicated to understanding the style element in EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. Diplomatic style is a rather tangible concept that existing research has not fully conceptualised. However, for the purpose of this research, as detailed in chapter three, this research provides a working conceptualisation of style by distinguishing two levels of analysis to decipher the diplomatic styles of China and the EU. The first level of analysis is the 'macro-level of diplomatic style' epitomised as the characteristics of the diplomatic strategies of China and the EU to the specific policy issue under consideration in the negotiations. The second level of analysis is the 'micro-level of diplomatic style' manifests in patterns of diplomatic activities (Jefferson, 2016) and diplomatic techniques of communication and negotiation (Jönsson and Hall, 2005), more specifically, this research focuses on the Chinese and EU styles of communication and negotiation in the

process of diplomatic relationship-building.

Essentially a political science qualitative analysis, the analysis of EU and Chinse diplomatic styles in the two case studies largely relied on decoding the original and vast data obtained through semi-structured interviews with EU and Chinese institutions and participant observation in diplomatic fora, coupled with discourse analysis. As such, the examination of diplomatic style does not come out of thin air, but a result from the 'deep immersion' and 'thick' description of the case studies. The secondary literature on EU-China relations provides a way to increase the reliability of the interview data. Interviews were particularly enlightening to ascertain the conceptualisation of style in EU-China diplomatic relationship-building context. In this sense, the work follows a 'positivist' traditions in utilising interviews as a means of generating objective knowledge and to test the falsifiable theoretical propositions of the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building. The interview-method was also operated from a 'interpretivist' stance, in that interviews are a process of knowledge-gathering (Mosley 2013, p.10), which could shed light on how the information provided by practitioners of EU-China relations complement or contradict knowledge developed in the scholarly community of EU-China relations. To triangulate interview data in light of other material was important. The 'triangulation of diverse data sources' on the same problem, which may involve data from interviews and thick description are appropriate methods to employ. Triangulation 'refers to the practice of increasing the amount of information brought to bear on a theory or hypothesis', using different kinds of evidence leads to more nuanced understanding of the question under-consideration (Brady and Collier, 2010).

4.5 Case study selection

The above-mentioned three-step process was adopted in the two case studies conducted 'in a way that will provide 'answers' to the general question' (George and Bennett, 2005). Case studies are recognised as the viable choices in doing qualitative research (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The reason to prefer case studies over other research methods relies on the fact that case studies have a 'distinct advantage' when 'a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which a researcher has little or no control' (Yin, 2018, p.13). 'How' and 'why' questions are more explanatory with case studies being the preferred research method, the more 'the research questions seek to explain some contemporary circumstance, the more that case study research will be relevant. Case studies also are relevant the more that the questions require an extensive and 'in-depth' description of some social phenomenon' (Yin, 2018, p. 4). Moreover, the 'distinct need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena' (Yin, 2018), to engage in 'thick description' of the phenomena and to 'retain a holistic and real-world perspective' (Yin, 2018; Geertz, 1973). The case study's unique strength lies in its 'ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artefacts, interviews, and direct observations, as well as participant-observation' (Yin, p. 12). Per Yin, a case study is an empirical method that 'investigates a contemporary phenomenon ('the case') in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident' (2018).

Moreover, a case study 'copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide design, data collection, and analysis, and as another result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge

in a triangulating fashion' (Yin, 2018, p. 15). As such, reliance on detailed knowledge of cases in small-N research associated with thick analysis is 'a major source of leverage for inference, and a characteristic strength of qualitative research' (Brady and Collier, 2010, p.179). The use of 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) can yield high level of analytic leverage gained from descriptive differentiation among cases. In the examination of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building, 'thick description' enables detailed investigation of the underlying institutional structure, complex negotiations of issues and exploration of diplomatic styles in the making of EU-China relations. This comes from the focus on 'the details of the cases' and a special focus on 'the meaning of human behaviour to the actors involved' (Collier, Brady and Seawright, 2010). In this light, in-depth case studies of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building would be particularly illuminating.

This now leads to the selection of the case studies in this research. The thesis selected two representative cases of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building: the EU-China negotiations of the landmark agreement – the *Agreement on Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications* (2009-2019) and the flagship EU-China climate-related bilateral cooperation initiative – the EU-China Emission Trading System (ETS) Project (2010-2019). The criteria for the selection of the agricultural-trade and climate change cases have been, from the outset, inspired by the increasing importance of agricultural-trade and climate change issues in EU-China relations. Trade has been the major theme in the ebb and flow of Sino-European encounters, and the agricultural-trade dimension is the only area where there is no trade deficit between the EU and China. Climate change is a growing area of EU-China diplomacy and the emissions trading systems cooperation is the flagship climate-related cooperation between the EU and China. The selected cases have been regarded as the archetypes of EU-China relations which are

particularly germane to understanding EU-China diplomatic engagements. There is an increasing spillover effect of EU-China trade and climate relations, in that climate change and international trade intersects in EU-China institutional contexts and at the respective levels of institutional activities in China and the EU.[1] Across the vast spectrum of EU-China relations, the degree of cooperation and depth of engagement vary depending upon policy issue. A comparison of the making of EU-China agricultural-trade relations and climate change relations could shed light on as to why and how EU-China relationship-building differ across specific policy issues, which may provide renewed clarity to the high degree of growing interdependence and expansion of the multifaceted EU-China relationship.

Second, the two cases were selected so that the value of the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building could be best tested across a comparative study of cases, which according to scholars may enable a more robust finding than a simple case study (Yin, 2009, pp. 54-55). To understand better the factors influencing EU-China diplomatic relationship-building, a comparative analysis of EU-China agricultural-trade relationship-building and EU-China climate change relationship-building could illuminate better the diplomatic relationship-building between the EU and China. The empirical chapters of the thesis chapter five and chapter six provide the theoretical model implicated empirical analysis to unveil the relationship-building between the EU and China, which could shed light on the important factors in the success or challenges of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. The comparative analysis in the present thesis is seldom employed in the field of EU-China relations. The comparability of the two cases lies in the fact that they both took place in a similar period, in both instances the two case studies

[1] Interview with EU and Chinese officials.

involve dense negotiations covering a near ten-year period with many twists and turns. Negotiations on EU-China GIs agreement and on emissions trading are both highly technical and political in character. The two cases present optimal opportunity for a within-case comparative study of EU-China relations, while strengthening generalisations and inferences across different cases.

4.6 Data collection

The process of data collection entailed an extensive fieldwork from 2015 to 2019 that involved conducting semi-structured elite interviews and participant observation primarily in China and Europe, and in Beijing and Brussels in particular. 'Interviews are an important and distinct means of understanding contemporary political actions and outcomes. Interviews can serve to identify causal mechanisms that are not evident in other forms of data; interview may serve as the central source of data' (Mosley, p.6). Moreover, interviews must be tailored to the purposes of the study, semi-structured interviews were chosen to enable the researcher to gauge all aspects of the development of the EU-China diplomatic relationship-building cases. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were chosen which 'gave the respondents latitude to articulate fully their response', providing a 'greater opportunity for respondents to organise their answers within their own framework. This increases the validity of the responses and is best for the kind of exploratory and in-depth work' that corresponds to the present research agenda (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002). Also, in semi-structured interviewing, the researcher 'arrives with a list of 'information needed' or 'questions to get to', but allows the conversation to unfold in a relatively flexible fashion' (Kapiszewski, MacLean and Read, 2015, p. 195). Interviewees were 'selected on the basis of what they might know to help

the investigator fill in pieces of a puzzle or confirm the proper alignment of pieces already in place' (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002). In this case, the EU-level institutions and Chinese institutions were the main interviewees. Interview visits took place in the EU institutional headquarters and other relevant institutions in Brussels, and in the Chinese institutions in Beijing. Elite interviews were of particular importance to piece together the puzzle of EU-China diplomatic interactions that may not have been obvious in the existing secondary literature. This is especially essential in the two case studies since the negotiations were fast unfolding during the research. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in two categories: 1) Interview on technical issues of the two case studies to understand the development of the negotiations and 2) Interviews on more strategic aspects of the cases to understand the bigger picture of EU-China relationship development. These interviews provided invaluable opportunities for the researcher to delve deeper into the past, present and future development of EU-China relations.

Over 100 semi-structured interviews were conducted confidentially and strictly applied to the regulations under CUREC. The interviews were conducted in English, French and Chinese depending on the interviewee. All interviews were transcribed and coded to minimise information loss. In terms of coding the interview, Annex I provides a summary of the interviewee's institutional affiliation, date and place in which the interview took place. Participant observation also complemented the research, I participated as a delegate in three most recent EU-China Business summits since 2015, and was member of the Oxford University Delegation to COP 23 in Bonn, Germany and COP 24 in Katowice, Poland which allowed me to engage first-hand the diplomacy of EU-China relations.

Moreover, the research is based on newly disclosed documents including, *inter alia*,

information on the EU-China negotiations, the minutes of the EU-China cooperation on emissions trading, the minutes of the EU-China Environment Dialogue, the minutes of the EU-China dialogue on energy, the minutes of the EU-China ETS project. The minutes were invaluable to gain insider's perspective on the unfolding of EU-China negotiations. The minutes were texts agreed by both the Chinese side and the EU side, which provided accurate, valid and official information on the inner workings of the relationship-building between the EU and China. They serve to complement the interviews, since interviews coupling with existing knowledge 'form the strongest foundation in interview-based methods either as the primary empirical strategy or as one of several empirical tools' (Mosley, p.6).

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has proposed a methodology anchored in social network analysis and complemented by qualitative methods in international relations to study EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. The methodology developed in this research is applicable and can further be replicated to assess all areas of the multifaceted EU-China relationship. Social network analysis provides conceptually precise methodological tools to systematically capture and assess the institutional structure – the actors and mechanisms – involved in processes of diplomatic relationship-building. Social network analytical metrics of *centrality* helps us to detect the configuration of actors in diplomatic relationship-building. *Strong and weak ties* enable us to further analyse the dynamics and intensity of relational mechanisms in diplomatic relationship-building. Complementing social network analysis, the research employs qualitative techniques of discourse analysis to contribute to our understanding of EU-China negotiations of complex substance and the

diplomatic styles influencing EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. Based on the premises of the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building in chapter three and employing the methodology developed in this chapter, the following chapters will provide a comparative in-depth case study of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building in the areas of agricultural trade and climate change.

Chapter 5 Making EU-China Agricultural-Trade Relations

5.1 Introduction

Widely unknown to the general public, a landmark treaty between the EU and China – the *Agreement on Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications* (hereafter the Agreement) has been in negotiation for nearly a decade. A provisional agreement and joint communiqué were issued during the 19th EU-China Summit in 2017, and the negotiations on the final Agreement were concluded in November 2019. The EU-China GIs Agreement is 'the first comprehensive and high-standard bilateral agreement negotiated between China and foreign countries',[1] the Agreement promises to not only deepen the agricultural-trade relationship between the EU and China, it also promises to contribute to the deepening and widening of EU-China relations. This chapter explains how China and the EU came to reach the landmark agreement in one of the most contentious areas of international trade through the prism of the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building. It purports that the process of negotiating the Agreement on GIs was shaped by the influence of the three core elements of structure, substance and style in EU-China relations. The process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building in agricultural trade is in essence, a process of the creation and regeneration of EU-China shared intentions, manifest in the EU-China shared commitment to a 'win-win agreement' and reciprocity in EU-China agricultural trade.

Anchored in the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building advanced in chapter three, and employing the social network analysis-based methodology detailed in chapter

[1] Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang's regular press conference on November 6, 2019, available at: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1713798.shtml

four, this chapter unfolds as follows. The next section discusses the background of EU-China agricultural-trade relations and the importance of the negotiations on geographical indications for EU-China relations. The third section unveils the structural dynamics of EU-China agricultural-trade relations entailing the institutional actors and institutional mechanisms by which the EU and China interact in EU-China agricultural-trade diplomatic relationship-building; and the evolution and impact of which on the process of the negotiations on geographical indications between the EU and China. The forth section decodes the complex political and technical issues under negotiation in EU-China diplomatic fora during the decade-long negotiations on GIs. The fifth section explores the distinct characteristics of EU-style and China-style diplomacies in agricultural trade, the section investigates the similarities and differences in EU-style and China-style agricultural-trade diplomacies and their impact at play in EU-China agricultural-trade relationship-building.

5.2 Background

5.2.1 The diplomacy of EU-China agricultural trade

Agriculture is of crucial interest for the economy and social development of both the EU and China. The EU is the largest partner in international trade of agricultural products.[2] As the world's largest trading power, 'the EU has trade agreements with 70 countries around the world, covering 40% of the world's GDP'.[3] In 2018, 'exports and imports of agricultural products between the EU and non-member countries accounted for 7.0 % of

[2] Detailed statistics on extra-EU trade in agricultural goods available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Extra-EU_trade_in_agricultural_goods

[3] Speech by Jean-Claude Juncker, *State of the Union 2018: the hour of European sovereignty*. 12 September 2018, Strasbourg, France

total EU international trade'.[4] International trade in agricultural products is important to two common EU policies: the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the EU's trade and investment policy. The EU is the world's biggest market, and the largest global exporter and importer of agri-food products.[5] Agriculture is of utmost importance for China. With 9% of the world's land, China ensures the food security for 21% of the world's population.[6] China is the world's second largest economy, and since it became the 143rd Member of the World Trade Organisation in 2001, China has become the world's second largest trader of agricultural products and 'a net exporter of agricultural products'.[7] Moreover, China has deepened its agricultural reform, improving the quality system of agricultural products.

The EU and China contribute to around one third of the world's GDP. The European Union is China's largest trading partner and China is the EU's second largest trading partner. EU-China bilateral agricultural trade relations constitute one of the most dynamic and important areas of this multifaceted EU-China relationship. Agricultural trade is the only sector where the EU has no trade deficit with China. Sino-European 'trade in agricultural and food products have been growing steadily over the past few years'.[8] China is 'the second destination for EU agri-food exports'.[9] The EU exports mainly high quality and high value products to China, while China mainly exports labour-intensive

[4] Detailed statistics on extra-EU trade in agricultural goods available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Extra-EU_trade_in_agricultural_goods
[5] European Commission, *EU continues to top global agri-food trade*, Press Release IP/18/4066, Brussels, 7 June 2018
[6] Minutes of the Third Meeting of the EU-China Dialogue on Agriculture and Rural Development, 2008
[7] Interview, 20 July 2016, Beijing
[8] European Commission, *European Union and China step up cooperation in agriculture and rural development*, Press Release IP/12/592, Brussels, 11 June 2012
[9] European Commission, Landmark agreement will protect 100 European geographical indications in China, Brussels, 6 November 2019

products and processed agricultural goods.[10] China-EU agricultural trade 'is becoming more and more important' and both parties believe that they 'would mutually benefit to engage in a closer global cooperation on agriculture and rural development'.[11]

5.2.2 The importance of geographical indications

One of the most important yet contentious issues in agricultural trade is the protection of geographical indications (GIs). As intellectual property, geographical indications are a multidisciplinary issue that concerns legal, trade and agricultural areas. A geographical indication is 'a distinctive sign used to identify a product as originating in the territory of a particular country, region or locality where its quality, reputation or other characteristic is linked to its geographical origin'.[12] Geographical indications (GIs) are indications that 'identify goods as originating in a country, region or locality where a particular quality, reputation or other characteristic of the product is essentially attributable to its geographical origin'.[13] A prominent example of an EU GI is Champagne, which is produced in the specific geographical region of Champagne in France, and conveys the unique characteristics of the natural conditions of its origin and superior quality linked with the producers' expertise; in a similar vein, a prominent example of a Chinese GI is 龙井茶 (Longjing Tea) produced in the specific geographical location of Longjing in China for over 1200 years. The quality-reputational link that is protected as geographical indication 'embodies the philosophy of caring about origin', and 'benefit producers,

[10] European Commission, *EU-China Cooperation Plan in Agriculture and Rural Development*, June 2012
[11] ibid., p.1
[12] See definition http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/accessing-markets/intellectual-property/geographical-indications/index_en.htm
[13] European Commission, GREEN PAPER Making the most out of Europe's traditional know-how: a possible extension of geographical indication protection of the European Union to non-agricultural products, COM (2014) 469 final, Strasbourg, 15 July 2014

consumers and society'.[14] GIs benefit consumers as the recognition of GIs 'enables consumers to trust and distinguish quality products while also helping producers to market their products better'.[15]

Geographical Indications represent 'important traditions and rich resources for both the EU and China'.[16] The EU believes the protection of GIs through trade agreements creates 'opportunities for EU producers on global markets and benefit the EU economy and consumers.'[17] From China's perspective, GIs are gaining increasing credence, GIs pertain to the quality of food and the development of the wider agri-food sector in China. For both the EU and China 'the protection of GIs is important for the protection of product quality and intellectual property rights, and for the regional economic development and foreign trade'.[18] Once fully entered into force, the stand-alone agreement on geographical indications (GIs) between the EU and China would be setting an 'example' for furthering not only the EU-China trade relations but also strengthening the broader EU-China ties.[19] The ambitious Agreement aiming at a protection in China of a list of EU GIs, and a list of Chinese GIs in the EU would be of mutual benefit for both sides. The list of GIs from both the EU and China will be annexed to the Agreement and protected in the territory of the Parties as of its entry into force. The Agreement would be one of the first 'deliverables' in EU-China relations and would be a 'rule-making agreement for Asia'.[20]

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[14] Interview, 3 October 2018

[15] European Commission, *Aims of EU quality schemes*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/food-safety-and-quality/certification/quality-labels/quality-schemes-explained_en

[16] *EU-China Summit: deepening the strategic global partnership*, European Commission – Press release of the 20th Summit between the European Union and the People's Republic of China, Beijing, 16 July 2018

[17] *Impacts of EU trade agreements on the agricultural sector*, prepared for the European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, by Copenhagen Economics A/S, December 2016

[18] Interview, Brussels, 25 March 2019.

[19] Interview, Beijing, 19 February 2016

[20] Interview, Brussels, 15 June 2017

As stated in the *EU-China cooperation plan on agriculture and rural development* signed in June 2012, through enhancing cooperation on quality products in agriculture, and particularly via reaching a geographical indications agreement in order to protect products from both parties, both the EU and China would 'equally benefit from a quality policy in the field of agriculture. Both Parties products could enjoy a high quality and high value image in each other's territory. This would increase the attractiveness of the products for the consumer and enable exports to increase by helping the product to be positively publicised' (European Commission, 2012). For the EU, a positive conclusion of the negotiations with China would further support the EU's efforts to maximise trade in agricultural products between the EU and China. For China, a successful conclusion of the negotiations would be an important future direction of China's agricultural trade development. In line with the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Measures of Intellectual Property (TRIPS), the EU legislation on geographical indications is protecting EU names, the market for EU GIs is around 54.3 billion euros (European Commission, 2017). There are 3389 registered European GIs in the EU by August 2018 with products registered as either Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) or Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) :[21]

[21] European Commission, *Aims of EU quality schemes*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/food-safety-and-quality/certification/quality-labels/quality-schemes-explained_en



- Mandatory for food and agricultural products
- Optional for wine



- Mandatory for food and agricultural products
- Optional for wines

The economic importance of the negotiation is significant. From the EU's perspective, the trade and investment relationship with China is vital as the EU 'wants to see a reformed China with a level playing field for our companies'.[22] According to a recent study on 'Geographical indications in the 21st century' conducted by the European Commission, on average, the price of a GI product is 2.23 times the price of a comparable non-GI product. Study also showed that after being registered as a GI, the price of Longjing tea increased by 10 per cent with regard to other teas between 2000 and 2005 (Kireyev and Osakwe, 2017). An eventual agreement on the protection of GIs between the EU and China would enhance EU-China trade and economic ties. China is one of the biggest importers and consumers of food in the world, the protection of GIs is of increasing importance for foreign companies, and also has positive impact on local producers in China. Moreover, GIs are one of the cross-border EU-China Intellectual Property matters, 'the effective protection and enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights is key for both the EU and China, and necessary for China's efforts to transform its economy'.[23]

[22] European Commission – Speech, Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Trade, speech at China Association Event, London, 'The EU and China: trade and investment in the global economy', 25 February 2016

[23] Fourth meeting of the EU-China High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue (HED) in Brussels, European Commission MEMO/13/934, Brussels, 25 October 2013

The negotiations between the EU and China on GIs have also significant political weight. It is the highest-level of negotiations between the EU and China, involving Chinese ministries and EU institutions, while attracting attention from the top leadership of both sides.[24] GIs carry a strong political weight in international negotiations, in particular for certain EU Member States who see GIs as a crucial offensive interest. It is inconceivable to negotiate any EU trade agreement without a chapter on GIs.[25] In an increasingly globalised marketplace, geographical indications stand out as 'an instrument to protect at international level what is unique and valuable at the local and regional level'.[26]

Furthermore, the negotiations have special cultural importance. China and the EU treasure a long and rich food culture. Both China and the EU enjoy a variety of local specialties, GIs encapsulate cultural and historical values and are a driver for local culture and sustainability. As such, EU-China bilateral negotiations on the protection of GIs are very important for promoting European culture in China and Chinese culture in Europe.[27] Agriculture has been claimed to be different from other sectors of the economy, which is underpinned by its 'multifunctionality',[28] the idea that agriculture has 'many functions in addition to producing food and fibre, e.g. environmental protection, landscape preservation, rural development…' is particularly supported by the EU (Scott, 2017). These non-trade benefits of agriculture have deep social and cultural roots which are encapsulated in the idea of geographical indications. For example, champagne is not just a particular wine from la région Champagne in France, it has significant cultural importance attached to it, it

[24] Interview, Beijing, 26 February 2016
[25] Interview, Brussels, 25 May 2016
[26] European Commission, *International aspects of agricultural policy: background document for the advisory group on international aspects of agriculture*, 2012
[27] Interview, Beijing, 15 September 2015
[28] 'Multifunctionality' in Glossary of Statistical Terms OECD 2000, available at: https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1699

is, to a certain extent, representative of the French wine culture. Similarly, Longjing Tea (龙井茶) is a primary element in Chinese culture. In this regard, the bilateral agreement has important cultural and social impacts, which both sides agree would 'positively influence rural development by fostering local values, culture and tradition; and help preserve the traditional heritage of both sides'.[29]

Against this background, the EU and China have 'a common interest to deepen the overall relations between the EU and China in the agricultural sector',[30] the negotiations on GIs represent a classic diplomatic negotiation case in EU-China relations.[31] Deciphering the process of negotiating this landmark Agreement provides important insights into the relationship-building process between the EU and China. Both the EU and China had concrete objectives to achieve, and both sides envisaged an ambitious agreement that could benefit both the EU and China. The following sections will unveil the relationship-building process in the EU-China negotiations on geographical indications, and shed light on the making of EU-China agricultural-trade relations.

5.3 Structure

5.3.1 Institutional actors

As the relationship-building model in chapter three explicates, capturing the *structure* of diplomatic relationship-building is the prerequisite to deciphering the process of

[29] Joint Communique of the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission and of the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China on the negotiation of the Agreement on Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications

[30] Joint Statement between the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China on the Establishment of an EU-China Project on Capacity Building for Young Professional Farmers and Agricultural Professionals

[31] Interviews with Chinese and EU officials

relationship-building. It is only logical to make sense of the institutional actors and the mechanisms by which they interact, can the process of diplomatic relationship-building be comprehended. Deciphering diplomatic structure by unveiling the institutional actors and the institutional mechanisms opens the first layer of the 'black box' of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

The focus on institutional actors are important as foreign economic policies are administered by the bureaucratic agencies of each government, and influenced by the rules that are established to regulate these agencies; the way they make decisions play a powerful part in shaping policy outcomes (Hiscox, 2017, p.95). By employing social network analysis conceptual tools of 'centrality', 'strong and weak ties' detailed in chapter four, the following reveals the configuration of institutional actors in EU-China agricultural trade relations. The structural configuration exhibits a network character that consists of a 'centrality' of the most consequential institutional actors, and a constellation of institutional actors in the periphery of the EU-China agricultural-trade network. The institutional actors are linked by 'strong and weak' ties built through a multitude of institutional mechanisms. The network of institutional actors in EU-China agricultural-trade relations resembles two concentric circles with a centrality being the core circle and a periphery being the outer circle, visualised below:

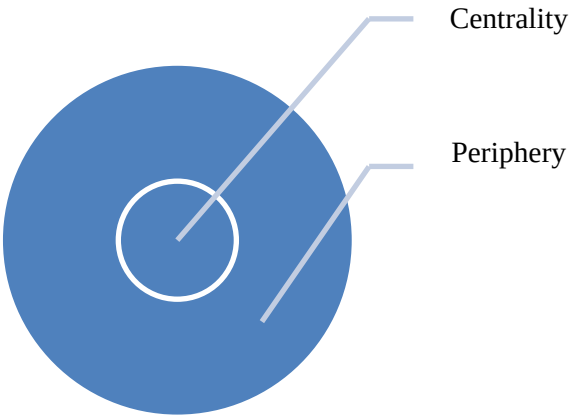


Figure 2 EU-China agricultural-trade network

The Centrality

The central institutional actors directly involved in the EU-China negotiations on GIs constitute the 'centrality' of the negotiations. The central institutional actors in the negotiations are the EU-level and Chinese governmental institutional-actors competent for agricultural-trade negotiations with the negotiation mandate.

On the EU side, it is the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) that negotiates on behalf of the EU. According to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the EU's common agricultural policy is an area in which competence is shared between the European Union and the Member States. The EU therefore needs to consult with all member states' about the specific products to be protected under the EU-China agreement, a process that brings in many actors into the negotiation process.[32] DG AGRI manages 'the negotiation of international agreements in areas of agricultural policy (trade in agricultural products, quality policy, food security etc.)', furthermore, it is DG AGRI who contributes to 'the implementation of

[32] Interview, Brussels, 17 May 2016

such international agreements and manages the relations with third countries related to agriculture'.[33] DG AGRI also works closely with the Directorate-General for Trade of the European Commission (DG TRADE) on EU-China GIs cooperation and negotiations. As the Agreement on GIs has implications for EU trade policy, and EU trade policy is an exclusive power of the EU – so only the EU, and not individual member states, can legislate on trade matters and conclude international trade agreements.[34] It is the European Commission that negotiates trade agreements with countries outside the EU on behalf of the European Union and all its Member States. Moreover, as GIs are intellectual property and DG TRADE is in charge of EU-China IPR cooperation, DG TRADE is active in the discussions on GIs.

The two DGs from the European Commission form the EU's central negotiation team. This composition is determined by the EU's harmonised legislation framework providing for high level of protected designations of origin and geographical indications in respect of agricultural products and foodstuff, wines and spirits. The updated harmonised regulatory system in the EU is based on the Regulation (EU) No. 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, which entered into force in 21 November 2012. Under this regulation, the concept of geographical indication in the EU encompasses protected designations of origin (PDOs) and protected geographical indications (PGIs).

On the Chinese side, there are four Chinese ministries directly involved in the negotiations. The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) was the lead negotiator in the beginning of the

[33] European Commission, *Strategic Plan 2016-2020*, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, 19 July 2016. p.5

[34] Article 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)

negotiations. MOA is a component of the State Council in charge of agriculture and rural economic development, and the geographical indications of agricultural products. Since the institutional reforms in 2018, MOA was renamed as the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China. MOA's role has gradually been eclipsed by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce as the negotiations evolved.[35] The Chinese Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) has 'main responsibility for policy coordination and implementation of all trade-related issues, including negotiating international trade treaties on behalf of the central government' (Bin 2015). It is currently in the leading seat in the GI negotiations. MOFCOM decides whether or not to invite other ministries to attend the formal negotiation rounds with the EU.[36] The State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC) is a ministerial level authority directly under the State Council in charge of market supervision and regulation, its focus is on trademark related issues such as the protection of collective and certification marks. The General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) is the authority in China responsible for the administration and protection of geographical indications.

The composition of Chinese central negotiation team is determined by the different regulatory and legislative systems governing geographical indications in China. There are three separate systems protecting GIs in China, including the protection of GIs under the Chinese trademark system with SAIC, and two other independent *sui generis* systems protecting GIs administered by AQSIQ and MOA. Protecting GIs under the Chinese trademark system, with the 'purpose of protecting the interests of consumers by way of the trademark's source-identifying function and the quality guarantee function' was implemented by SAIC in 2003 alongside the revision of Trademark Law in China. SAIC

[35] Interview, Beijing, 8 September 2015
[36] Interview, Beijing, 30 October 2018

issued the Measures for the Registration and Administration of Certification and Collective Marks, detailing provisions about the registration and administration of GIs under the trademark regime.[37] In short, GIs can be protected in China under the *sui generis* and trademark systems (Wang and Kireeva, 2010). The *sui generis* protection emphasises the strict control over the production process (Zheng, 2017). The AQSIQ rule is influenced by the French system *appellation d'origine controlee* (AOC), the rules are promulgated in the Provisions on the Protection of Geographical Indication Products (PPGIP) in 2005.[38] The MOA rule was promulgated under the Measures for the Administration of Geographical Indications of Agricultural Products.[39]

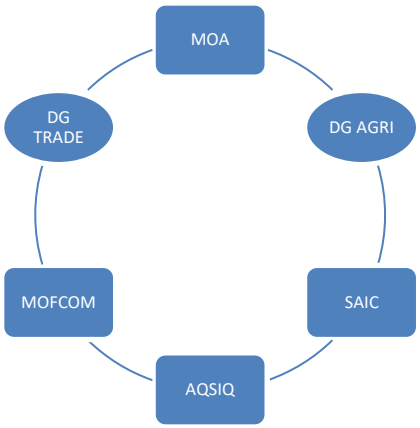


Figure 3 Central institutional actors in EU-China agricultural-trade relations

At the negotiation table, DG AGRI represents the EU to negotiate with China and works closely with DG TRADE during the negotiation process. The central Chinese negotiation team consists of two ministries MOFCOM and MOA, who work in close collaboration with two other ministerial-level agencies SAIC and AQSIQ.

[37] See full *Measures* online: http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/cn/cn047en.pdf
[38] See full *Provisions* online: http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/cn/cn041en.pdf
[39] See full *Measures* online: http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/cn/cn121en.pdf

The Periphery

Apart from the central negotiation teams, there is a constellation of institutional actors indirectly involved in the negotiations, providing consultation and advice, forming a 'periphery' of actors orbiting around the 'centrality' of the EU-China agricultural-trade network. On the EU side, there is a multitude of actors involved in the policy formulation and implementation process vis-à-vis China. In the category of governmental institutional actors, the European External Action Service (EEAS) is an important institutional actor in supporting EU-China relations. As the EU's diplomatic service, the EEAS is essentially a 'coordinator' who liaises all EU institutions with their Chinese counterparts and is of particular significance in negotiating the statements of diplomatic meetings, such as the annual summitries between the EU and China.[40] The Delegations of the EEAS around the world are important in 'injecting daily coherence' of the set of EU objectives into the EU's economic and trade diplomacy.[41] The EU Delegation to China is the most important EU institution based in China, it coordinates activities between China and EU level institutions and also EU member states' activities in China. The negotiations on GIs are reported at the Trade and Agriculture counsellors' monthly meeting at the EU Delegation in Beijing, and at the EU ambassador to China's monthly '28+1'meeting with all member states ambassadors.

The European Parliament (EP) has significant political weight in European external relations. Due to the legislative 'consent procedure' of the EU, the European Parliament has the final 'consensus' voting power on the international agreements negotiated by the European Commission, and the negotiation process must be made transparent and involve

[40] Interview, Brussels, 9 December 2016
[41] Interview, senior diplomat, May 31, 2017

consulting with the European Parliament throughout the negotiations (Raube, 2012). This has been particularly potent in the EU legislation process since the Lisbon Treaty. In the negotiations on GIs, the Parliament's Agriculture Committee and the International Committee on Trade are kept abreast of the development of the negotiations. The role of the European Parliament in the negotiations is most visible towards the end of the negotiations.[42] The final Agreement must be approved by both the Council and the Parliament, the EP's role in the codecision of the EU is 'vital' in EU-China relations. Moreover, the European Parliament is a debating forum where representatives from other EU institutions, civil society and academia exchange views with their Chinese counterparts.[43]

The Council of the EU (known as the Council) is another influential institutional actor in EU-China relations. Since the 1990 Maastricht Treaty, the EU adopts a legislative procedure of co-decision shared between the European Parliament and the Council. This co-decision sharing makes the Council the EU's 'ultimate political authority' (Lewis, 2012). It was the European Council who gave the Commission the mandate to negotiate an Agreement on GIs protection with China.[44] Two Council committees are particularly important throughout the negotiations. The Council's Trade Policy Committee not only gives the negotiation mandate,[45] but also 'advises and assists the Commission in negotiating agreements with third countries or in international organisations in the area of the common commercial policy'.[46] The negotiation on GIs are being debriefed in the

[42] Interview, Brussels, 10 June 2016
[43] Interview, Brussels, 10 June 2016
[44] For the Proposal for a Council Decision on the conclusion of an Agreement between the European Union and the People's Republic of China on cooperation on, and protection of, geographical indications, see: http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2011_agri_008+2015_agri_058_chine_gi_en.pdf
[45] Interview, General Secretariat of the Council, 25 May 2016, Brussels
[46] Article 207 (3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU

Council's expert groups, such as the Council's Asia-Oceania Working Party (COASI), which is a working group that handles preparations for discussions on EU relations with Asia and Oceania in the Council. Discussions at the Council normally focus on 'fixing the scope of the negotiations, redefining specific negotiation objectives in the process', the Council provides the overall conditionality on the negotiation.[47]

Another category of EU institutional actors are EU business representatives. The most influential one is the EU Chamber of Commerce in China who represents a common voice for the business sectors of Europe operating in China. The European Chamber offers policy recommendations that cover various industry sectors including agriculture and intellectual property protection. A few other business representatives are also involved in EU-China agricultural-trade relations. The EU–China Business Association (EUCBA) acts as a channel of communication for government institutions of the EU and China. It promotes major EU–China events, such as the annual EU-China Business Summit, and holds consulting meetings with the European Commission and EU member states.[48] Other important institutional actors are Business Europe and EuroCommerce whom the European Commission updates on relevant development in EU-China trade relations, including the negotiations on GIs. EUIPO is the European Union Intellectual Property Office responsible for managing EU trademark and the registered Community design. They work with the IP offices of the EU Member States and international partners to offer a registration experience for trademarks and designs across Europe and the world. EUIPO provides technical expertise for the discussions on GIs.

Other influential actors are EU-funded projects in China that serve to provide technical

[47] Interview, 25 May 2016, Brussels
[48] Interview, 5 October 2015, London

support for the negotiations. The most active project is the current IPKey whose role is to develop expertise and cooperation with China.[49] In the case of GIs they provide technical expertise in legal matters of the EU-China negotiations and organise relevant events. China IPR SME Helpdesk is another influential actor in the intellectual property domain which provides information and advice regarding intellectual property protection in support of European small and medium sized enterprises. The Helpdesk provides consultation in EU-China IPR Working Group meetings. The largest trade and investment-related EU cooperation project with China – the EU-China Trade Project (EUCTP) is a technical assistance project funded by the European Union to assist China's capacity building. The EUCTP provides technical and administrative support for the bilateral negotiation.[50]

On the Chinese side, the most influential actors are government institutions who possess decision-making power in the negotiations. Important actors include the Ministry of Finance (MOF) who is not directly involved in the talks, but is consulted by key decision-makers from time to time. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is in regular contact with the EU Delegation to China and other Member States embassies in Beijing strengthening cooperation between the EU and China in all policy areas including the negotiations on GIs.[51] The Chinese Mission to the EU in Brussels is represented at main diplomatic talks between the EU and China. The Mission works as a coordinator bridging the EU and China, and facilitates bilateral meetings and visit arrangements. The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) is a 'policy planning' ministerial level government institution and responsible for divising China's economic and

[49] Interview, IP expert, Beijing, 18 February 2016
[50] Interview, Beijing, 19 February 2016
[51] Interview, Beijing, 29 October 2018

development strategy. NDRC is not directly involved in the talks but has significant weight in China. Another important institutional actor is China's State Council, from which the final agreement needs the approval.[52] The National People's Congress (NPC) is in close contact with the European Parliament where there are many bilateral exchanges and study trips undertaken amongst EU and Chinese officials. The China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) also plays an increasingly important role in China's international trade policy agenda. Under the auspices of MOFCOM, it represents the business and government communities in China, and is the main interlocutor and counterpart of Business Europe in China.

The second main category of Chinese institutional actors are research-related institutional actors. Chinese think tanks are exerting increasing influence on the direction of Chinese foreign policy, by providing consultation and advice to policy-makers (Zhao, 2010). China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) is amongst China's most influential research institutes for international studies. Affiliated to the China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, research carried out at the Institute is focused primarily on 'medium and long-term policy issues of strategic importance, particularly those concerning international politics and world economy'.[53] In a similar fashion, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) regularly provide reports and consultation for Chinese foreign policy-making.

The Institute of European Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences holds an annual China-EU Ambassadors Forum, where all member states and EU Delegation's ambassadors are invited to the forum for an open exchange with Chinese think tankers and

[52] Interview, Beijing, 29 October 2018
[53] Details at: http://www.ciis.org.cn/english/2019-01/10/content_40639859.html

leading academics. Moreover, the Chinese Association for EU studies, under the auspices of CASS, holds an annual conference on EU-China relations, which is the most comprehensive academic discussions on EU-China relations in China. Chinese academic institutions provide regular analysis and input to the development of EU-China trade relations. In the discussions on GIs, Chinese Agriculture University is the most important and influential in terms of providing expertise and advice.[54]

5.3.2 Institutional mechanisms

The institutional actors interact through a multitude of mechanisms shaping the negotiation process. To further open the black box of EU-China negotiations on GIs, the following section examines the multiple levels of institutional mechanisms underpinning the development of EU-China agricultural-trade relations, and their contribution in enabling the EU and China to negotiate the Agreement on GIs. This requires us to first step back from the agricultural-trade field to assess the overall dialogue architecture of EU-China relations, and then zoom in on the specific mechanisms that enable the EU and China to negotiate geographical indications. The overall EU-China relationship building process is supported by a three-pillar structure consisting of the I Pillar – Political Dialogue, II Pillar – Economic and Sectoral Dialogue, and III Pillar – People-to-People Dialogue.[55] Within these three pillars, three high-level dialogues, the High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue, the High Level Strategic Dialogue and the EU-China High Level People-to-People Dialogue were established respectively in 2008, 2010 and 2012, and were built to be the institutional toolkit for exchange and communication between the EU and China. Under the high-level dialogues there is a ‘less visible, but flourishing area of

[54] Interview, Beijing, 23 January 2019
[55] See Annex for the EU-China dialogue architecture

exchanges on sectoral policies and technical issues or, as they are known as, 'sectoral dialogues' between China and the EU'.[56] As one distinctive and significant element of the institutionalised EU-China relationship, these sectoral dialogues are intended to address areas of common concern and interests, exchange knowledge and provide a solid foundation for EU-China relations. They take place from working level to ministerial level, and involve a range of participants including, inter alia, diplomats, government officials, representatives from the business sector, analysts from research and scientific institutions and representatives from NGOs and civil society.

The negotiations on GIs between the EU and China are characterised by a web of interactions taking place across a multitude of diplomatic ties within the agricultural-trade domain. The dialogues and bilateral interactions on agricultural trade fall primarily under the High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue. Talks and discussions take place from the lowest level of technical exchanges to the highest level of summit diplomacy. The framework is designed to increase dialogue, information exchange and produce policy 'deliverables'. Some meetings aim to provide the strategic directions for the negotiations; some meetings aim to exchange concerns, identify priorities and resolve conflicts; others move the agenda forward and accelerate consensus-building; while others simply aim to raise the profile of EU and Chinese GIs in both Europe and China.[57]

The annual EU-China Summit is the highest level diplomatic meeting and the most important diplomatic mechanism between the EU and China.[58] Since the first EU-China Summit held in 1998 in London, the summit has been held on an annual basis, alternating

[56] European Commission, *EU-China relations: an overview of sectoral dialogues between China and the European Commission*
[57] Interview, 23 February 2016, Beijing.
[58] Interview, Brussels, 2 July 2018

between Brussels and Beijing. The summits are normally represented by the Chinese Prime Minister and accompanying Ministers and, for the EU, by the President of the Council of Ministers, the President of the European Commission and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy as well as other relevant European Commission Vice-Presidents and Commissioners. In recent years, the summits normally issue Joint Statements regarding agreed policy positions on bilateral, regional and international issues. The summit provides 'strategic vision' for the relationship and a 'deadline' for the annual work projects.[59] The strategic importance of the summit lies in advancing the negotiations with the involvement of the top leadership. For instance, the 2015 summit celebrating 40 years of full diplomatic relationship between the EU and China gave further impetus to the negotiations with the highest level of political support. It was a 'very significant political push' for the negotiations, for the first time the negotiations on GIs were mentioned in the highest-level EU-China summit joint statement. As confirmed by officials from both sides, 'the negotiations reached for the first time close to completion, and a top-down political push was vital'.[60] Another summitry is the EU-China Business Summit which is the highest-level platform for exchanges between EU and Chinese business and political leaders. The annual EU-China Business Summit has important functions bringing together diplomatic and political officials, industry and business representatives to initiate and assesses important policies concerning EU-China economic and trade relations.

The High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue was launched in November signalling the EU and China's commitment to address the imbalance in bilateral trade flows. The Dialogue discusses 'strategies in EU-China trade, investment and economic cooperation

[59] Interview, 25 July 2016, Beijing
[60] Interview, 30 March 2017, Brussels

and coordinate bilateral projects, studies and develop plans in priority sectors. […] including, inter alia, effective market access, intellectual property rights, environment, high technology and energy in order to find concrete means to increase trade in a balanced way'.[61] Participating European Commissioners and Chinese ministers discuss a range of issues, the HED is of strategic and forward-looking nature. The HED also focuses on ways to improve effectiveness of the legal framework for Innovation, including IPR, and technology, and fosters technology transfer through better intellectual property protection and EU-China economic cooperation. In recent years, the HED has become more and more important and effective in the strengthening of EU-China relations. It now takes the remit of the summit going beyond trade and investment, unresolved issues at the EU-China summit are 'picked up' again at the following HED. In this way, the HED refines the agenda of the year until the next summit'.[62]

The annual EU-China Economic and Trade Joint Committee is an annual ministerial meeting, based on the 1985 Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the then European Economic Community and China. It is now co-chaired by EU Trade Commissioner and the Chinese Minister of Commerce. The Joint Committee is an important forum to take stock of policy developments in the area of bilateral trade and investment. The annual meeting also provides opportunities to exchange views on important issues in EU-China trade relations, discuss ways to enhance EU-China cooperation, and provides another important venue to discuss on-going GIs negotiations.

The formal rounds of EU-China negotiations on GIs have taken place since 2010. After each round, there is a transparency or 'state of play' report sent to the Council of the EU

[61] The 2007 EU-China Summit Joint Statement
[62] Interview, 25 July 2016, Beijing

and the European Parliament. The Council then updates the 'trade configuration' in Brussels on the state of play of the negotiations.[63] The formal negotiation rounds are completed by a series of ad hoc meetings and video-conferences taking place in between some of the formal rounds of negotiation. The formal negotiation rounds are still the most influential meetings in the process of reaching the agreement.[64]

Within the multitude of EU-China sectoral dialogues, several of them are dedicated to fostering EU-China trade cooperation, and have indirectly contributed to advancing the negotiations. The EU-China Trade and Investment Policy Dialogue is considered as a typical mechanism that mesh formality and informality in strengthening EU-China trade ties.[65] Represented by the European Commission's DG Trade and China's MOFCOM, the Trade and Investment Policy Dialogue has an increasingly prominent role in fostering EU-China relations.

Another important tie in the EU's broader engagement with China on trade and investment policy is the EU-China Economic and Trade Working Group. Held annually, the ETWG meeting allows the EU to maintain 'regular contacts not only with the Ministry of Commerce, but also with other ministries and agencies who are competent for specific aspects of EU-China trade and investment',[66] the discussions prepare the ground for upcoming high level meetings, such as the Joint Committee, the High-level Economic and Trade dialogue (HED) and the EU-China Summit. Moreover, the ETWG enables the EU to further engage with China on 'fundamental issues on which practical solutions need to be

[63] Interview, 18 May 2016, Brussels
[64] Interview, EU negotiator.
[65] Interview, 2 May 2016, Brussels
[66] *European Commission: Update on the state of EU-China trade-related discussions,* available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2016/april/tradoc_154473.pdf

found'.[67]

As GIs are a type of intellectual property, two intellectual property-related mechanisms contribute to the negotiations. The first is the annual EU-China Intellectual Property Rights Dialogue. It sets out the EU-China working agenda on IPR cooperation for the year. The Dialogue was established via a Memorandum of Understanding for IPR cooperation between the EU and China in 2004. In 2015, at the 17th EU-China Summit, a second Memorandum of Understanding on reinforcing the EU-China IP Dialogue Mechanism was signed, upgrading the IP Dialogue Mechanism to vice-ministerial level, the EU-China IPR Dialogue Mechanism would be required to report progress to the EU-China High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue.[68] The Dialogue has proven to be 'an effective way to build trust', and at every EU-China IP Dialogue, there is normally discussions on the GIs negotiations.[69] The EU sees the EU-China IPR Dialogue as the blueprint for the EU's cooperation with others in the world on intellectual property issues.[70] Monitoring the agenda set out in the EU-China IPR Dialogue is the EU-China Intellectual Property Rights Working Group that takes place twice per year. The EU-China Working Group serves to implement the agenda of the EU-China IPR Dialogue. The IPR Working Group is more 'concrete, focus-oriented and result-oriented than the IPR Dialogue'.[71] The Working Group involves more technical discussions allowing the EU and China to discuss pressing concerns and solve problems. Industry representatives are also invited as observant in the EU-China Intellectual Property Rights Working Group.

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[67] *European Commission: Update on the state of EU-China trade-related discussions,* available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2016/april/tradoc_154473.pdf

[68] EU-China Summit Joint Statement: The way forward after forty years of EU-China cooperation, 29 June, 2015

[69] Interview, 2 December 2016, Brussels

[70] Ibid.

[71] Interview, 23 February 2016, Beijing

The EU-China Agriculture Dialogue is another important annual meeting contributing to the negotiations. The EU-China Dialogue on Agriculture was established in July 2005, enabling the European Commission's DG AGRI and Chinese Ministry of Agriculture to exchange views on bilateral and multilateral agricultural issues and promote mutual understanding, trust and bilateral co-operation'.[72] The dialogue is an important 'mechanism for maintaining and further strengthening the mutually beneficial cooperation in agriculture and in particular willingness to further explore areas of cooperation on how to enhance bilateral trade and quality of agricultural products'.[73] Furthermore, the Agriculture Dialogue provides opportunities for both sides to exchange information on newest developments in the area of agriculture between the two sides. The dialogue meeting is a high level cooperation meeting, and many projects have been implemented successfully since its inception. The EU and China are taking this dialogue further and strengthening 'cooperation in the field of agricultural research, rural development, food security and quality policies'.[74]

Last but not least, the Technical support Programmes and workshops are essential in supporting the negotiations on GIs. The EU's policy papers clearly portray technical cooperation as an important component of EU-China cooperation. In the field of IPR, Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) has been established to complement the IPR Dialogue and IPR working group. Other institutional mechanisms consist of ad-hoc public events such as roundtables, workshops and other regular meetings between experts and

[72] EU-China cooperation plan in agriculture and rural development, available at: http://www.euroconsulting.be/upload/news/documents/20120613053037_EU_-_China_Cooperation_Plan_in_Agriculture_and_Rural_Development.pdf

[73] Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the EU-China Dialogue on Agriculture

[74] European Commission, *European Union and China step up cooperation in agriculture and rural development*, Press Release IP/12/592, Brussels, 11 June 2012

officials from both the EU and China. These ad hoc meetings serve primarily as avenues for information and technical exchange, and to raise the profile and visibility of EU and Chinese GIs in Europe and China.

5.3.3 Structural coordination and EU-China shared intentions in EU-China agricultural-trade diplomacy

The institutional structure of EU-China GIs negotiations exhibits a complex network character with a growing number of institutional actors and mechanisms incorporated into the decade long negotiation process. The institutional structure is the bedrock for the development of EU-China shared intentions that are fundamental to EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. As explained in chapter three, shared intentions 'give rise to shared action that is both reliable and predictable' (Bratman, 1992), and 'provides a means for consensus making and cooperation' (Hasanov and Beaumont, 2016). The complexity of this institutional configuration poses coordination challenges to diplomatic relationship-building. Proposition one of the theoretical model of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building highlights when a balanced structural coordination becomes actualised in diplomatic relationship-building, the transformation of shared intentions takes place and fosters further cooperation. A well-coordinated institutional structure provides a strong basis for diplomatic relationship-building. In the case of EU-China agricultural-trade relations, a coordinated 'high level of cooperation and understanding between the EU and China in the field of agriculture' reflects a strong degree of EU-China shared intentions, and could further deepen EU-China 'cooperation and communication' and establish 'more strongly mutual respect and trust' between both

sides.[75]

The increasing involvement of different actors in the decade-long negotiation process elevates the importance of inter-institutional coordination. The difficulty in achieving EU-China coordinated action substantially complicated and prolonged the negotiating of the Agreement. As EU negotiators emphasised, China is 'a big country with a huge administration, coordination within the Chinese institution and with us are vital for the progress of the negotiations.[76] Similarly, the EU's inherent EU-level institutions and member states' influence in EU decision-making process made it difficult for Chinese negotiators to fully grasp the institutional intricacies of the EU. The multiplicity of the actors on the EU side is further complicated by the fact that all EU negotiations are conducted with parliamentary oversight. There is also 'competition between the executive, legislature and judiciary powers in the EU context'.[77] The European Commission is the EU's executive power holder, the Council is simultaneously the EU's main decision-making and legislative institution, while the European Parliament is the EU's legislative power holder. Echoing Henry Kissinger's famous remark on Europe's telephone number, Chinese officials talked about the paradox between the EU's diversity and unity: 'we don't know who to call sometimes'.[78]

Institutional actors in the process of EU-China agricultural-trade relationship-building

The complex institutional structure of EU-China agricultural-trade relations is partly due to the fact that the institutional setup in China is different from the governance structure in

[75] Minutes of EU-China Agricultural Dialogue in 2008
[76] Interview, 30 March 2017, Brussels
[77] Interview, 18 May 2016, Brussels
[78] Interview, Beijing, 17 November 2017

the EU.[79] As detailed in chapter four, social network analysis methodological tools of 'centrality' and 'periphery' metrics can capture this nuance in the EU-China decision-making process. It is possible to group the institutional actors' role and influence in the GIs negotiations into three categories. The centrality consists of only governmental institutions, while the periphery consists of governmental, business-related institutional actors and research-related institutional actors. The peripheral actors provide consultation to the central actors in the relationship-building process. Accordingly, the institutional actors are listed in the table below:

	Centrality: decision-making		**Periphery: advisory/consultation**	
	Chinese Institutions	**EU Institutions**	**Chinese Institutions**	**EU Institutions**
Governmental Institutional Actors	• MOA • MOFCOM • AQSIQ • SAIC	• DG TRADE • DG AGRI	• MOFA • MOF • Chinese Mission to the EU • NDRC • NPC • State Council	• European Parliament • Council of the EU • EEAS • EU Delegation to China • DG GROW
Business-related Institutional Actors	• N/A	• N/A	• CCPIT	• EU Chamber of Commerce in China • EU-China Business Association • Business Europe • EuroCommerce • EUIPO • IPKey • China SME Helpdesk
Research-related Institutional Actors	• N/A	• N/A	• CICIR • CIIS • CASS • Chinese Agriculture University	• Various Research institutes in Europe

Figure 4 Institutional actors in EU-China agricultural-trade relations

[79] Interview, 8 September 2015, Beijing

The multiplicity of actors involved in the negotiations highlights the growing importance of peripheral actors contributing to the building of the EU-China agricultural-trade relationship. Agricultural-trade policy is an area characterised by complexity and technicality. Different institutional actors fulfil different roles in the institutional network of EU-China agricultural-trade relations and exert differing degrees of influence on EU-China GIs negotiations. In the case of the European Union, the preferences and strategies of actors significantly influence the process and outcome of EU negotiations (Elsig and Dupont, 2012). The EU's external policy competences are enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which details the main provisions on the EU's external action and the external dimension of the EU's internal policy. The negotiations on geographical indications fall under the remit of the EU's common agricultural policy which is the oldest competence of the EU, and the EU's trade policy which is the second oldest competence of the EU.[80] For China, the growing institutional actors, such as business and research institutions in the diplomatic processes, and coupled with the varying roles of these actors in the dynamic interaction between domestic and international politics, are gradually transforming the nature of the Chinese diplomatic environment (Su, 2010). While central ministries still possess the central power in decision-making in China, the Chinese institutional decision-making process is increasingly influenced by a variety of stakeholders (Bin, 2015; Zhao 2010).

The central institutional actors in the EU-China agricultural-trade network determine the actors around the negotiation table and 'call the shots' in the decision-making process. This centrality of the institutional configuration in EU-China agricultural-trade relations

[80] Interview, the Permanent Representation of a member state to the European Union, 13 March 2017, Brussels

uncovers the differences in the institutional complexities of governance between the EU and China. The centrality of Chinese institutional actors outnumbers the EU's central institutional actors. Four Chinese governmental ministries – the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), the State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC) and the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ) compose the central Chinese negotiation team, while two European Commission Directorates – DG AGRI and DG Trade represent the EU siting around the negotiation table. Moreover. the influence of the institutional actors in the negotiations has evolved throughout the process. On the Chinese side, the weight of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Agriculture are higher than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the negotiations. During different periods of the negotiations, certain Chinese institutional actors have become more influential. The centrality of the Ministry of Agriculture at the beginning of the negotiations was replaced by the centrality of the Ministry of Commerce after the completion of a 'pilot project' in 2012.[81] The influence of the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture diminished with the rising influence of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce through the progression of the negotiations. On the EU side, the European Commission has the major weight in the negotiations on the European side, but the increasing importance of the European Parliament was evident towards the final stage of the negotiations, the final agreement would also need the eventual ratification from the European Parliament.[82]

This structural complexity in EU-China relations rendered the agricultural- trade talks challenging. The complex institutional structure allows a variety of actors to bring in individual objectives into the negotiations which affect the relationship-building process.

[81] Interview, Beijing, 8 July 2016
[82] Interview, 2 June 2016, Brussels

The growing number of institutional actors involved in the negotiations render it difficult to aggregate divergent objectives and intentions into a consensus and affect the development of EU-China shared intentions in the process. 'China's diplomacy towards the EU is centred around inter-ministerial arrangements; the EU's diplomacy towards China is based on inter-institutional arrangements'. [83] The complex structural configuration necessitated strong structural coordination and determined political leadership to advance the negotiations. Balanced structural coordination and strong political leadership propelled forward the negotiations but were not achieved easily.[84] In particular, the early stages of the negotiation and eventual conclusion of the negotiation relied on the support of the top political leadership. Political leadership was vital to enhance structural coordination and the strengthening of EU-China shared intentions which was even more potent when the negotiations reached deadlock. From 2015 until end of 2016, negotiations were barely moving, the stalemate was broken with accelerated political meetings, particularly the EU-China summit in 2015 changed the course of the negotiation in a very positive way.[85]

Institutional ties in the process of EU-China agricultural-trade relationship-building

The complexity of the institutional structure underpinning EU-China agricultural-trade relations is also manifest in the multitude of institutional mechanisms connecting the plethora of institutional actors. The institutional mechanisms allow negotiations to occur, they enable the flow of dialogue, and at their best, the cultivation of EU-China shared intentions as the shared commitment to the win-win Agreement in the negotiation process. Some institutional mechanisms enable the exchange of information on recent

[83] Interview, 10 June 2016, Brussels
[84] Interview with Chinese and EU negotiators
[85] Interview, 3 June 2016, Brussels

developments of EU-China GIs cooperation and the exchange of views on mutual expectations regarding the final agreement. Some institutional mechanisms allow negotiation parties to discuss the scope of the agreement and find clarifications on technical issues. The characteristics of the institutional mechanisms have important effects in relational dynamics, and can be measured according to social network analysis metrics – strong and weak ties which depict the quality of ties, detailed in chapter four. In the context of EU-China negotiations on GIs, the creation of EU-China shared intentions is likely to be least effectual in weak ties, whereas strong ties elicit strong shared intentions. The influence of the mechanisms differ according to the level of formality of the institutional mechanisms and the frequency of the institutional dialogues. In this light, the multitude of EU-China institutional mechanisms contributing to EU-China agricultural-trade relations can be categorised as follows:

Mechanism	**Characteristics-Metrics**	
	Formality/Informality	**Frequency**
Annual EU-China Summit	Highest formality	1 per year
EU-China Business Summit	Highest formality mix informality	1 per year
The EU-China High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue	High formality	1 per year
EU-China Economic and Trade Joint Committee	High formality	1 per year
Formal Negotiation Rounds	Formal	1.7 per year since 2011
EU-China Trade and Investment Policy Dialogue	Formal	1 per year
EU-China Economic and Trade Working Group	Formality mix informality	1 per year
EU-China Intellectual Property Rights Dialogue	Formal	1 per year
EU-China Intellectual Property Rights Working Group	Formality mix Informality	2 per year
EU-China Agriculture Dialogue	Formal	1 per year

Figure 5 Institutional mechanisms in EU-China agricultural-trade negotiations

As the table above indicates, different mechanisms of EU-China engagement are intertwined shaping the development of EU-China agricultural-trade relations. The overall 'umbrella' is the summits and the High-level Economic Dialogue, all the 'lower level meetings feed into the summits'.[86] The strongest ties are found at the highest level of interactions between the EU and China, particularly in the form of summitry, as summits function by giving political impetus to the negotiations which most often serve as the vital forces in finalising the negotiations.[87] For instance, the 19th EU-China Summit in June 2017 was a major milestone in pushing the negotiations forward, and also contributed to the development of the broader EU-China relationship. The 19th EU-China Summit called for 'a conclusion of the negotiation of the Agreement on the Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications' and 'instructed the negotiators to accelerate the work and resolve outstanding issues'.[88] Both sides published the list of 200 European and Chinese geographical indications at the summit, and during the margins of the Summit, leaders were able to 'constructively discuss topics across the entire spectrum of EU-China relations' and 'a number of agreements were signed that will concretely strengthen what is already a comprehensive relationship'.[89]

Summit diplomacy has the potential to generate strong shared intentions. Negotiators from both sides reflected that when the topic is mentioned during the summits or in the summit statements, it shows the issue has political endorsement which can contribute to building political momentum. The High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue (HED) form strong

[86] Interview, Brussels, 26 May 2016.
[87] Interview with negotiators.
[88] European Commission, Joint Communiqué of the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission and of the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China on the negotiation of the Agreement on Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications, 2 June 2017, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/newsroom/2017-06-02-joint-comm.pdf
[89] ibid.

ties in the sense that they are 'useful in paving the way towards a successful EU-China Summit in the economic and trade field' (European Commission, 2018). Moreover, at the HEDs progress achieved in the negotiations are reviewed and substantial issues are discussed. The formal meetings are the place for the EU and China to build political trust and advance the negotiations. As negotiators reflected, the formal bilateral channels of cooperation remain the 'most important mechanism for building Sino-European ties'.[90] The advancement of the negotiations required usually the interplay of both formal and informal channels of engagement. One of the most successful formal rounds of negotiations – the 12th round of formal negotiation was held in Brussels in April 2017, where intensive preparation was also undertaken to organise a 'fieldtrip of geographical indications' for the Chinese delegation, 'informal interactions warm up the actual formal negotiation'.[91] Officials from both the EU and China stated that the EU and China could capitalise on the potentials of informal connections more extensively in fostering further EU-China cooperation.

The frequency of the institutional dialogues elicited strong EU-China ties and strong EU-China shared intentions. EU-China shared intentions, as expressed in the shared commitment to a 'win-win' negotiation agreement between the EU and China, develop out of frequent communication. A senior diplomat noted that 'although the main mechanism of cooperation between the EU and China are formal summits, there is a necessity to hold summits more regularly. There aren't any illusions, we both know that all the modalities of engagement between the EU and China should be employed to interact more frequently with each other'.[92] The lower-level mechanisms are vital in sustaining the frequency of

[90] Interview, 19 August 2016, Beijing
[91] Interview, 16 March 2018, Brussels
[92] Interview, 29 March 2017, Brussels

EU-China dialogues, and enhancing the progress of the negotiations. The sectoral dialogues and lower-level technical negotiations are mechanisms of 'consultation and cooperation between China and the EU' in the field of agricultural trade.[93] As negotiators remarked, the formal rounds of negotiations are 'not fast enough to resolve such complex negotiations, there is normally video-calls on technical aspects of the cooperation before actual rounds of the negotiations. Frequent coordination and cooperation are extremely important during these times'.[94] 'We don't wait until the next round of formal negotiations to make changes or make progress', the usefulness of the lower-level or even informal contacts in-between formal rounds serve to 'build direct contact, to discuss technical and legal issues' and they provide opportunities for frank exchanges between the EU and China'.[95]

A productive meeting with 'positive outcomes' between both sides not only pushes forward the negotiation, but also enhances mutual understanding.[96] Agricultural-trade interactions between the EU and China consist of mainly information sharing and concrete operational projects. The Sino-European agricultural-trade cooperation entails addressing challenges and common concerns. Talks also involve long-term reform and maintaining short-term goals'.[97] Frequent communication allows the EU and China to increase the exchange of information, minimise conflict, and to strengthen the momentum of the GIs negotiations.[98] As such, GIs negotiations are mentioned at all levels of EU-China interactions to ensure the negotiations are 'on the radar of the EU-China policy-makers, as

[93] Interview, Beijing, 8 September 2015
[94] Interview, 26 February 2016, Beijing
[95] Interview, 17 May 2016, Brussels
[96] Interview, 30 March 2017, Brussels
[97] Interview, Brussels, 3 June 2016.
[98] Interview, 6 June 2016, Brussels

all the meetings and dialogues have an impact on the negotiations'.[99]

The complexity of the institutional structure in EU-China agricultural-trade relations rendered the negotiations challenging. Different intentions and negotiation objectives were entailed in the negotiations.[100] Negotiators from both the EU and China noted that among the 'different ways of engagement, the EU and China can always do more, to share information, improve transparency, to establish trust and find common ground. The attitude of openness and smooth communication are essential requirements'.[101] The importance of institutional coordination between Chinese and European institutions, especially direct, frequent bilateral contacts between the competent agencies working on GIs were pivotal for the successful EU-China negotiation Agreement on GIs. A balanced coordination within and between the periphery and centrality of EU-China agricultural-trade network enhanced the development of EU-China shared intentions and facilitated the process of diplomatic relationship-building.

5.4 Substance

The institutional structure is the bedrock of EU-China GIs negotiations, and enables both parties to talk substance. As the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building posits, the substance of diplomatic relationship-building concerns the issues negotiated in the process and entails mainly the political and technical objectives that impact the development of EU-China shared intentions. The process by which China and the EU came to reach the 'win-win' EU-China GIs Agreement was shaped by the shared

[99] Interview, 21 April 2017, Brussels.
[100] Interview, 25 May 2016, Brussels
[101] Interview, Brussels, 2 July 2018

intentions that were developed between the EU and China via negotiating their political and technical objectives. The EU and China formally started to negotiate the stand-alone bilateral *Agreement on Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications* in 2011. 16 formal rounds of negotiations have taken place, alternating between Brussels and Beijing. The 16 formal negotiation rounds were held as follows:

Formal Negotiation Round	Date	Place
Round 1	March 2011	Beijing
Round 2	July 2011	Brussels
Round 3	November 2011	Beijing
Round 4	April 2012	Beijing
Round 5	September 2012	Brussels
Round 6	March 2013	Beijing
Round 7	June 2013	Brussels
Round 8	October 2013	Beijing
Round 9	March 2014	Brussels
Round 10	June 2014	Beijing
Round 11	July 2015	Brussels
Round 12	November 2016	Beijing
Round 13	April 2017	Brussels
Round 14	9-10 May 2017	Beijing
Round 15	25-27 May 2017	Beijing
Round 16	January 2018	Beijing

Figure 6 Formal negotiation rounds

The process of negotiating the Agreement has been a dynamic interplay of political and technical negotiations embedded in the evolving bilateral EU-China agricultural-trade relationship. The mandate of the negotiations includes complex technical and political

agendas. The core political objective for both sides is a 'mutually beneficial agreement' between the EU and China that would 'foster closer the overall EU-China relationship'.[102] The Agreement is set to be a precedent for future EU-China relations with significant implications for EU-China trade ties such as a future EU-China Free Trade Agreement. The political salience of the successful conclusion of the negotiations is far-reaching, as it would send a strong political message about the stability of EU-China relations in times of uncertainty.[103] The political objective is in line with the respective reform objectives of the EU and China in agriculture. China has committed efforts to 'boost the sustainable development of agriculture and rural economy through intensifying rural reform and improving supportive policies', while the EU has the political objective of 'improving the EU competiveness on the global markets and meeting the highest environmental and food safety standards'.[104] The technical objective of the negotiations is to secure protection of GIs in both the EU and China through a list of European and Chinese geographical indications that will be protected through the bilateral agreement. The technical objective of the negotiations is linked with the economic value of the agreement. The protection of European and Chinese GIs with effective enforcement measures of GIs protection in both China and the EU would enable a better level-playing field and reciprocity in EU-China trade ties, which could benefit both producers and consumers.[105]

In pursuit of the political and technical objectives, five milestone events brought the EU and China closer to the Agreement and were of particular importance to the overall relationship-building process. The 'milestones' are akin to the 'idea of turning points or events that move the process on a trajectory toward or away from agreement' which are

[102] Interview, 21 April 2017, Brussels
[103] Interview, 5 April 2017, Brussels.
[104] Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the EU-China Agriculture and Rural Development Dialogue, 2009
[105] Interview, Beijing, 17 December 2017.

central to understanding the dynamic process of international negotiation (Druckman, 2001). They are 'benchmarks of progress' and serve to 'move a negotiation in the direction of agreements' (Druckman, 2001). By the same token, the milestones contributed to the EU and China achieving their political and technical negotiation objectives, and shaped the shared intentions underpinning EU-China relations, which eventually brought the EU and China to the Agreement. The formal rounds of the negotiations and the milestones are illustrated below:

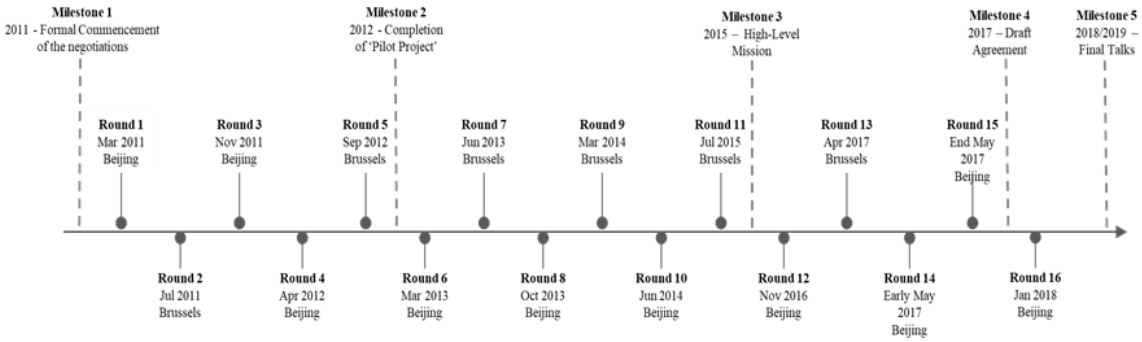


Figure 7 Negotiation timeline

5.4.1 Development of the negotiation

Milestone 1: Formal commencement of the negotiation in 2011

The opening of the negotiations in 2011 was the first milestone in the negotiations, it symbolised the alignment of the EU and China's political objectives. The commencement of the negotiations necessitated both parties to reach the same political lines, which was a long time coming. A memorandum of understanding between AQSIQ and DG Trade was first signed in 2005 that called for initiating a project for understanding GIs registration procedures on both EU and Chinese sides. It was subsequently followed by discussions to start the negotiations of a 'Pilot Project', known as the '10+10' project in July 2007, which

entailed the European Commission and China's AQSIQ formally lodging applications for the protection of 10 agricultural GIs in each other's territories. The objective of the 'Pilot Project' were of both political and technical nature: the political aim was to ensure better understanding of the respective GI system between the EU and China to facilitate the negotiations of a future bilateral agreement; the technical objective was to obtain registration and protection in the EU and China's territories for a group of GIs.

Political momentum was strengthened through intensified talks. The 2008 EU-China Dialogue on Agriculture and Rural Development was an important step during which both the EU and China discussed the management of GIs. 'China briefed on its GI management system and the achievement that has been made, and expressed its willingness to strengthen experience sharing and cooperation with the EU on GI product certification and management. The EU stressed its commitment to protect GIs at an international level, both at multilateral level and through bilateral agreements'.[106] The following 2009 Annual EU-China Dialogue on Agriculture saw significant progress being achieved regarding the '10+10 GI pilot project' that paved way for the 'launch of negotiations on an EU-China Geographical Indications bilateral cooperation agreement' at the EU-China summit in November 2009 (Council of the EU, 2009). The two sides reviewed the 'latest development in the agricultural sector' including the 'diverse cooperation activities at different levels carried out in a number of agricultural fields', both sides acknowledged the 'significant role that the dialogue mechanism had played in sustaining and promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the agricultural sector'.[107] The EU and China 'showed willingness to make further efforts to reinforce information sharing on agricultural policies between the two sides and promote the trade of agricultural products by further expanding

[106] Minutes of the Third Meeting of the EU-China Dialogue on Agriculture and Rural Development, 2008
[107] Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the EU-China Agriculture and Rural Development Dialogue, 2009

cooperation areas'.[108]

In November 2009, both sides agreed to launch negotiations for a bilateral agreement on GIs. The 'Pilot Project' that consists of examining the EU and China's registration procedures through a limited '10+10' number of GIs facilitated further applications for GIs registrations in the EU and China. Both the EU and China recognised that 'the protection of geographical indications is important for the protection of product quality and intellectual property rights, and for the EU and China's economic development and foreign trade'. With the long history and cultural traditions in China and Europe, negotiators believed that China and the EU could establish 'a precedent in their international cooperation in geographical indications' which would 'enhance bilateral trade of GIs products, and pave the way for the further deepening of mutually-beneficial cooperation'.[109]

Preparations for the EU-China GIs Agreement negotiations intensified not only with political meetings but also with technical discussions. A technical joint feasibility study for a bilateral agreement on geographical indications in which options to bridge the knowledge gap in the field was discussed. The *Feasibility Study* (Kireeva, Wang and Zhang, 2009) was to provide an overview of the legal framework and practical experience of protection of GIs in the EU and China. The study revealed that the EU-China relationship had reached a favourable period where both sides had 'favourable condition' to negotiate a bilateral agreement. The two sides 'complement each other economically', and that the EU and China are 'in mutual need of each other in terms of GIs protection', as the potential final agreement can bring both sides 'positive economic, cultural, social

[108] Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the EU-China Agriculture and Rural Development Dialogue, 2009
[109] Interview, 21 April 2017, Brussels

benefits' (Kireeva, Wang and Zhang, 2009). This Feasibility Study positively reinforced the commitments from both sides to strengthen cooperation and facilitate mutual recognition of GIs. It strengthened negotiators' belief that a bilateral Agreement could enhance product quality and economic development in the EU and China.

The Council formally gave the Commission the mandate to negotiate the bilateral Agreement on GIs protection with China in August 2010.[110] The protection of European GIs is a central objective of the EU's negotiation mandate, which 'derives from the willingness expressed by the Member States to ensure protection of the EU Geographical Indications (GIs) in China'.[111] The inception of the negotiations showed the converging views of the EU and China on matters related to agricultural trade and geographical indications. The first round of formal negotiations took place in March 2011 in Beijing. The negotiations were given additional boost when then EU Agriculture Commissioner Dacian Cioloş visited China in 2010 with a trip to see the production of Longjing Tea, a symbolic Chinese GI renowned both in and out of China.[112] The high-level political mission allowed both sides to raise awareness of the active cooperation the EU and China have for mutual registration of GI products, and strengthened political will from both sides to enhance protection on quality products.

In April 2010, the 6th EU-China IP Dialogue meeting was held co-chaired by MOFCOM and the European Commission, the meeting enabled both sides to discuss the establishment of a GI platform to offer European and Chinese GI stakeholders to access

[110] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2011_agri_008+2015_agri_058_chine_gi_en.pdf

[111] ibid.

[112] European Commission, *EU-China Geographical Indications – '10 plus 10' project is now complete*, Press Release IP/12/1297, Brussels, 30 November 2012

information and report on potential problems associated with GI registration in China and the EU. It was also the occasion for both sides to confirm 'the importance they attach to the technical cooperation programme as a key tool of their bilateral cooperation in the area of IPR'.[113] During the following year EU-China IP Dialogue meeting in 2011, both sides 'welcomed the establishment of the bilateral negotiation on GIs protections and progresses made so far'.[114]

Milestone 2: Completion of 'Pilot Project' in 2012

In parallel with the political development, important technical talks were well underway. The 'Pilot Project' was successfully negotiated in 2012. The project provides for the protection of 10 European geographical indications and 10 Chinese geographical indications in each other's territories. The successful completion of the 'Pilot Project' opened up 'the possibility of a potential second GI project or of another kind of cooperation on GIs'.[115] The 'Pilot Project' was an indication that the objective of reaching a more ambitious agreement on the protection of GIs in China and the EU was within reach. Moreover, it promoted reciprocity, in that it ensured that both China and the EU could register and protect GIs in each other's territories. Akin to a 'test' cooperation agreement, the 'Pilot Project' examined the EU and China's GIs registrations procedures through the relatively small number of twenty GIs, which would allow the EU and China in the longer term to present more applications for registration of GIs. The GI products in the 'Pilot Project' are listed below:[116]

[113] Joint Minutes 7th EU-China IP Dialogue Meeting
[114] ibid.
[115] Interview, 26 April 2017, Brussels
[116] European Commission, EU-China geographical indications – '10+10' project is now complete, Brussels, 30 November 2012

10+10 products	
Chinese GIs	**European GIs**
平谷大桃 (Type of peach)	Comté
盐城龙虾 (Type of crayfish)	Grana Padano
镇江香醋 (Type of rice vinegar)	Priego de Córdoba
东山白卢笋 (Type of asparagus)	Prosciutto di Parma
金乡大蒜 (Type of garlic)	Pruneaux d'Agen/Pruneaux d'Agen mi-cuits
龙井茶 (Type of tea)	Roquefort
琯溪蜜柚 (Type of honey pomelo)	Scottish Farmed Salmon
陕西苹果 (Type of apple)	Sierra Mágina
蠡县麻山药 (Type of yam)	West Country Farmhouse Cheddar
龙口粉丝 (Type of vermicelli/noodles)	White Stilton Cheese/Blue Stilton Cheese

Figure 8 GIs of the '10+10' Pilot Project

The 'Pilot Project' was initially only intended to serve as a 'tool' to promote agricultural trade between the EU and China. But with the completion of the project, it was made clear that both sides wanted a more ambitious bilateral agreement on GIs, it further confirmed mutual interest for a comprehensive agreement on GIs.[117] The experience was useful to test both the EU and China's GI systems and to identify potential benefits and challenges for a wider GI agreement.[118] The then EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development welcomed the completion of the 'Pilot Project' stating that it was an 'important step in the process towards a better protection in China of EU Geographical

[117] Interview, Brussels, 17 May 2016
[118] Interview, Beijing, 30 October 2018

Indications for agricultural products and foodstuff', and that both sides looked to 'build on this success through negotiating a broader bilateral agreement on GIs'.[119]

In the lead up to the completion of the '10+10' project, both formal and informal diplomacy intensified. A 'landmark visit' of the then EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development to China and a delegation of 30 GI producers from across the European Union took place in March 2011 (European Commission, 2011). The aim of the trip was to 'inspire interest in quality products from Europe among the Chinese consumers'.[120] The European delegation's meetings with MOFCOM, MOA, AQSIQ and SAIC discussed how best to mutually protect the high-quality products in the EU and Chinese markets. Both sides emphasised that the cooperation between China and the EU on the trade of quality foods was 'extremely promising', and that 'Europe and China represent the two areas with the longest and richest culinary arts'.[121]

Moreover, technical objectives were being advanced with technical consultation fueling the ongoing negotiations. A four day consultation was organised in March 2011 coinciding with the Commissioner's visit to China, so as to raise the profile of the GI negotiations amongst Chinese stakeholders.[122] The purpose of the consultation was also intended to increase awareness about current Chinese and EU GI policies, and to facilitate the exchange and communication between government and business circles. To support the registration of GIs, agro-food technical expertise was required to ensure adequate technical classification of GIs. AQSIQ, MOA, DG AGRI and industry representatives participated

[119] European Commission, *EU-China Geographical Indications – '10 plus 10' project is now complete*, Press Release IP/12/1297, Brussels, 30 November 2012
[120] European Commission, Commissioner Dacian Ciolos visits China to promote European quality foods, Presse Release 1P/11/328, Brussels, 18 March 2011
[121] ibid.
[122] Interview, 18 May 2016, Brussels

in the consultation. It enhanced the political commitment of EU-China cooperation on GIs.[123] In September 2011, a follow-up seminar on GIs was implemented between Chinese stakeholders and the European Commission. The seminar brought together GI experts from China and Europe to discuss detailed technical issues regarding the role of GIs in rural development and best practices in GIs management and administration. The seminar was an important step for both China and the EU on the path to enhancing GIs recognition, protection and trade in GIs.

Milestone 3: 2015 High-level mission

The 40th anniversary of full EU-China diplomatic relations in 2015 was an important milestone of political nature that provided positive strategic direction to the negotiations. Negotiators from both the EU and China considered the occasion to have altered the course of the negotiations. The 17th EU-China Summit in 2015 was a key step in the process towards advancing the negotiations. The summit infused new political energy into the negotiations, and provided opportunity for high-level intergovernmental consultation. For the very first time, the topic was put on the agenda of the talks between the top leaders at the EU-China summit; and for the first time since the publication of EU-China summitry statements, the EU-China GI negotiation was mentioned in a stand-alone paragraph of the *EU-China Joint Statement: The way forward after forty years of EU-China cooperation* on 29 June 2015:'Both sides agreed to work for the rapid resolution of outstanding issues in order to strive for the early conclusion of the negotiations on a comprehensive Geographical Indications agreement'. Negotiators commented that the short paragraph was 'small but potent', it was an important testimony to the importance of the negotiations both

[123] Interview, Brussels, 8 June 2018

sides attach to.[124]

The EU-China Summit reinvigorated the negotiations on GIs. At the Annual Conference of EUCCC in December 2015, the EU Ambassador to China underscored the 'paramount importance' of the successful conclusion of the ambitious Geographical Indications agreements, stating that the conclusion of such an ambitious Geographical Indications Agreement and 'firmly advancing reform would contribute to a more balanced relationship, and help build the right conditions for eventual FTA negotiations'.[125] In April 2016, EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Hogan visited China to 'facilitate agri-food trade' and held meetings with 'respective Ministers and national authorities in order to address common interests relating to agriculture and ongoing bilateral issues'.[126] In his discussions about GIs with ministers from MOA, AQSIQ and SAIC,[127] the Commissioner noted that China was 'particularly important market for the EU agri-food sector' which has shown 'considerable growth in recent years'.[128] The high-level meetings highlighted 'the quality, traditions, and added value of our (EU) products, as well as our (EU) food safety and traceability guarantees', and stimulated 'further interest from Chinese in European food and drink'.[129]

The symbolic 40th anniversary of EU-China relations provided important opportunities to

[124] Interview, Brussels, 16 March 2018; Interview, Brussels, 22 March 2018.
[125] Speech by the EU ambassador to China, *Changing landscape of EU-China economic and trade relations*, Beijing, 1 December 2015
[126] European Commission, Commissioner Hogan in official visit to China and Japan to promote EU agri-food trade, available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/hogan/announcements/commissioner-hogan-official-visit-china-and-japan-promote-eu-agri-food-trade_en
[127] Interview, Brussels, 17 May 2016
[128] European Commission, Commissioner Hogan in official visit to China and Japan to promote EU agri-food trade.
[129] European Commission, *Commissioner Hogan in official visit to China and Japan to promote EU agri-food trade*, Announcements, 15 April 2016

strengthen political discussions on areas related to GIs. The EU and China decided to 'upgrade' the intellectual property rights (IPR) mechanism for the EU and China to 'coordinate in the best possible way'.[130] As an important turning point in the EU-China IPR cooperation, the IPR mechanism was elevated to vice-ministerial level ensuring that the IPR dialogue reports to both the HED, and the Joint Committee represented by the EU's trade commissioner and China's minister of MOFCOM. In this way, the IPR dialogue was strengthened with enhanced 'strategic' and 'political leadership' that contributed to the advancement of the negotiations, especially the negotiations of the more technical issues.[131] A high-level seminar to explore the procedures protecting GI products and to ensure a level playing field for market operators, was conducted by EU and Chinese institutions. The seminar was a means to support the more technical stage of the negotiations, as both the EU and China would like to ensure the highest level of protection and enforcement for GIs, and the best protection for producers on the European and Chinese market.[132]

Milestone 4: Draft Agreement in 2017

Political and technical breakthroughs in the negotiations were made in the summer of 2017 at the EU-China summit where the EU and China released a 'mini negotiation agreement' in the form of a communiqué entitled *Joint Communiqué of the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission and of the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China on the negotiation of the Agreement on Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications*, marking a significant milestone in the negotiation process. The *Joint Communiqué* stated that the final

[130] Interview, London, 11 April 2016
[131] Interview, 18 May 2016, Brussels.
[132] Interview, 25 July 2016, Beijing

Agreement would aim at direct protection of EU and Chinese GI names and high level of protection in both regions. The *Joint Communiqué* stated that both the EU and China will 'publish each other's list of selected GI names for opposition in a mutually agreed way in accordance with their respective domestic legislations on 3rd of June 2017 as a key step to reach a rapid conclusion of the ongoing negotiations. Both sides acknowledge that the agreement should result in reciprocal trade benefits. They commit to accelerate their work to reach an agreement that will provide for effective protection for each party's list of GIs'. The official list of GIs in the EU and in China that will be protected through the bilateral agreement was subsequently published. The list of GIs include 100 Chinese GIs, ranging from tea, fruit, bean paste, vegetable, fresh or processed cereals, spices, alcoholic and spirit drinks, meat and many others. The 100 EU GIs include wine, spirit, beers, cheese, oil, meat, fruit, vegetables and fresh or processed cereals amongst many other EU products. This first *Joint Communiqué* on GIs injected new energy into the negotiations as political leaders 'called for a conclusion of the negotiation of the Agreement on the Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications within 2017 and instructed the negotiators to accelerate the work and resolve outstanding issues'.[133]

The list of GIs to be protected consists of two hundred European and Chinese GIs – 100 from each side – in the eventual agreement, including agricultural products, foodstuffs, wines and spirits.[134] In the EU-China GIs agreement, the provisions of the Agreement will go beyond Article 23 of WTO's The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), with much higher level of protection. And there would be no

[133] See *Joint Communiqué*

[134] List of Chinese GIs: https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/newsroom/2017-06-02-notice-pub.pdf ; List of European GIs: https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/newsroom/2017-06-02-gis.pdf

distinction between the different categories of products.[135] This is important as currently all GI products under TRIPS are covered at a basic level, under the provisions of Article 22; wines and spirits are protected by Article 23 of the TRIPS with a higher level of protection. The EU-China GIs Agreement elevated the level of protection and this EU-China coordination of the rules protecting GIs is a significant step in a better international harmonisation of geographical indications protection, and intellectual property rights protection.[136]

The lead up to the draft agreement in 2017 was achieved through intense political meetings and negotiations of political substance. Three rounds of negotiations took place consecutively in Beijing which was a bust in progress after a period of stalemate between the EU and China (following the 11th round of talks). After the 2015 negotiations, talks stalled but in the lead up to the EU-China summit in 2017 both sides wanted to 'deliver' to the summit and negotiations resumed and intensified.[137] Leveraging key political milestone in EU-China relations created much needed momentum in the negotiation. The EU-China summit in 2017 was a 'breakthrough summit' that accelerated the negotiations.[138]

Milestone 5: Final stage of negotiations in 2018/2019

Robust political commitments brought the negotiations into the final stage in 2018. The final road to the win-win outcome required both the EU and China to find alignment on the remaining technical and political issues. Political efforts were of particular importance. As the negotiators remarked following a formal round of negotiation in 2018, 'the EU and

[135] See Advisory Group Presentation on EU-China GI Agreement, 13 March 2014
[136] Interview, 31 May 2017
[137] Interview, 26 April 2017, Brussels
[138] Interview, 21 March 2018, Brussels

China have made progress, now it's the final stage at narrowing the differences and convincing both sides that it is possible to reconcile and reach an ambitious agreement for GIs protection'.[139]

The final stage of the negotiations concerned negotiating issues of 'political nature'.[140] As a senior official reflected 'when you reach the end of the negotiations, the biggest hurdles that are left to be resolved often need 'political decision' endorsed by top leaders at summits to make the final judgement to eventually reach an agreement'.[141] At the 7th High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue held in Beijing 2018, both sides committed to 'accelerate work on an agreement on Geographical Indications with a view to ensuring an announcement' at the upcoming EU-China Summit.[142] The 21st EU-China Summit took place in April 2019 in Brussels that provided a forum for engagement at the highest political level and for advancing the negotiations. It was made clear that the EU-China partnership was 'more important than ever before', as the EU and China 'share the same belief that working together makes the world a stronger, safer and more prosperous place'.[143] The statement stressed the need for political and strategic efforts to accelerate the GIs negotiations, 'tangible progress on the interactions between the EU and China, meetings such as the EU-China summits raise awareness of particular subjects and give strategic direction in the negotiations'.[144] Negotiators noted that the EU and China had reached a provisional agreement on 'the text of the agreement and on protection for the majority of the GI names of each side', and that both 'commit to work together in the

[139] Interview, 10 August 2018, Brussels
[140] Interview, 16 March 2018, Brussels.
[141] Interview, 17 May 2016, Brussels
[142] European Commission, *EU and China discuss economic and trade relations at the 7th High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue*, News Release, Brussels, 25 June 2018
[143] European External Action Service, *EU-China Summit: Rebalancing the strategic partnership*, Press Release, Brussels, 9 April 2019
[144] Interview, 2 June 2016, Brussels

coming months to resolve the remaining issues, in particular in relation to the outstanding GI, which is necessary in order to be able to formally conclude the negotiations in 2019'.[145] Once a conclusion of the agreement is negotiated, 100 GIs will be ratified protected on both sides. The eventual landmark agreement on geographical indications between the EU and China have significant positive impact on strengthening EU-China cooperation on agricultural-trade relations and fostering international agricultural-trade governance.

Due to the differences between China and the EU regarding the protection and the negotiation of GI products, negotiators also needed to address the final technical challenge, including the coexistence between GIs and existing trademarks, the level of protection of GIs and the possibility for Chinese GIs protected under the Agreement to use the EU logos on the Chinese market as well. The technical challenge to finalise the agreement consists of mainly having 'reciprocity' in treatment of the file names of GIs. As both the EU's and China's lists of GIs are to be protected simultaneously.[146] The challenges in the negotiations were compounded by enforcement procedures and technical translation of names and verification, as due to cultural and linguistic differences in terms of the GIs products, the list of the names have to be translated and cross-checked for registration.[147] During this stage, consultations with stakeholders, EU member states and the Council's Trade Policy Committee exerted leverage in the negotiations.[148] In 6 November 2019, the landmark agreement was concluded in Beijing. For China, the agreement is 'the first comprehensive and high-standard bilateral agreement between China and foreign

[145] EU-China Joint Statement, Brussels, 9 April 2019
[146] Interview, Brussels, 21 March 2018
[147] Interview via telephone, 7 December 2018
[148] Interview, 26 March 2019, Brussels.

countries',[149] and indicates China's commitment to a mutually beneficial cooperation with the EU and to 'uphold the rules-based system of free trade and an open economy'.[150] Echoing the Chinese view, the EU's Commissioner for Agriculture and rural development stated that 'this agreement shows our commitment to working closely with our global trading partners such as China. It is a win for both parties, strengthening our trading relationship, benefitting our agricultural and food sectors, and consumers on both sides'.[151]

5.4.2 Negotiating substance and EU-China shared intentions in EU-China agricultural-trade diplomacy

The negotiations of the EU-China GIs Agreement was a process of aligning political and technical objectives that influenced the development of EU-China shared intentions, manifested as the shared EU-China commitment to a 'win-win' ambitious Agreement and enhanced reciprocity in EU-China trade ties. As posited in the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building in chapter three, substance refers to the politically salient and technically complex issues being negotiated in diplomatic fora. The degree of substance-complexity influences EU-China diplomatic relationship-building through the development of EU-China shared intentions. The gradual alignment of issues and diplomatic objectives between the EU and China in the bilateral talks on GIs was a process of enhancing mutual trust and understanding which translated into a long-term build-up of shared intentions between the EU and China. However, the complexity of the issues prolonged the alignment of negotiation objectives, necessitating much more time anticipated for building trust, gaining familiarity and enhancing understanding that

[149] Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang's regular press conference on November 6, 2019
[150] Ibid.
[151] European Commission, Landmark agreement will protect 100 European geographical indications in China, Press release, Brussels, 6 November 2019

contributed to developing shared intentions in the making of EU-China agricultural-trade relationship.

As discussed in chapter three, issues of highly political and technical complexity requires an increasing level of intentional cooperation and shared intentions to enable negotiation parties to work through challenges and reach consensus in an effective and efficient fashion. Complex substance demands more intentionally-mediated and strengthened institutionalised cooperation. The negotiation on GIs touches upon social, economic and cultural aspects of Europe and China and the EU-China relationship.[152] The substance of EU-China negotiations on geographical indications is characterised by highly complex political and technical issues, which required both parties to allocate substantial time, energy and resources in the negotiations. The negotiations have taken far longer than expected.[153] At the beginning of the negotiations, the lack of information and understanding on registration of foreign GIs between both sides inhibited the progress. During the middle-stage of the negotiations, especially after the completion of the 'Pilot Project' the translation of Chinese GI names and EU GI names presented a time-consuming challenge. Both sides anticipated the negotiations to be finalised in 2013, it was prolonged into 2017, the EU and China concluded the negotiations on the bilateral agreement in November 2019 and the Agreement is currently in the legal stage for ratification. The complexity of the issues impinged on the process of EU-China GIs negotiations. A senior official reflected that the negotiation has its own pace, even when the highest level of leaders have agreed to push for the final agreement, the complex negotiations of political and technical issues have to take its own time.[154] In short, when

[152] Interview, Brussels, 8 June 2018
[153] Interview with officials.
[154] Interview, 21 March 2019, Brussels

negotiation parties have divergent perspectives on various policy issues, it would take longer to convey shared intentions among actors. Information sharing is thus very important in facilitating the negotiation rhythm to flow. Complex substance rendered it longer to reach an agreement and also rendered the development of EU-China shared intentions in relationship-building more challenging.

The negotiations entailed the management and reconciliation between the EU and China's respective political and technical objectives. The alignment of political and technical objectives enhanced the EU and China's shared intentions in the process, which was reflected in their shared commitment to reaching a 'win-win' agreement. For both the EU and China, they share a fundamental interest in opening trade, and the GIs negotiations are 'political priority' and a 'serious collective engagement'.[155] Due to the salience and complexity of the issues, the negotiations were not void of challenges and required robust diplomatic commitment and active management from both the EU and China.[156] Overcoming challenges allowed the EU and China to discover anew their shared priority objectives and reinforced EU-China shared intentions. The milestones in the process capture the ebb and flow of the EU and China overcoming challenges, negotiating breakthroughs, and important events that advanced the EU and China towards the final Agreement.

The process of EU-China negotiations on GIs was in parallel the development of EU-China shared intentions manifested in the shared commitment to reaching the Agreement and enhancing reciprocity in EU-China agricultural-trade relations. The development of EU-China shared intentions was cultivated throughout the different

[155] Interview, Brussels, 8 June 2018
[156] Interview, Brussels, 29 March 2017

milestones of the negotiations. At the earlier stage of the negotiations, especially milestone two the negotiation of the '10+10 Pilot Project' between the EU and China instilled confidence and increased shared understanding in the negotiation parties. Through intensified technical talks, transparency was gained for both sides to better understand their respective policies with respect to GIs. In the final stage of the negotiations as milestone five depicts 'the negotiations have been pursued through consultation and in light of mutual benefits and equality'.[157] The milestone events often prompted the EU and China to articulate their respective negotiation objectives, re-examine the information and to adjust their long-term and short-term objectives; in so doing, both sides were able to advance and capitalise on their shared intentions for reaching an agreement. EU-China shared intentions convey a sense of 'we-ness' between the EU and China, that is akin to a force pulling both sides toward a same diplomatic endgame.

As milestone three has shown formal meetings with high-level political endorsement often created opportunities to strengthen EU-China shared intentions during the decade-long negotiations. High-level political meetings and missions strengthened negotiation momentum by articulating a 'we-ness' and 'together-ness' of managing EU-China relations. The strengthening of EU-China shared intentions has been precipitated by political will, as when there is 'strong political will, things go faster, and depending on the geopolitical context in the world certain circumstances may bring the EU and China closer together based on common objectives at the time of the negotiations'.[158] The visit of Chinese top leadership to the major three EU institutions, the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament in 2014 had 'significant influence in unblocking

[157] Interview, 2 July 2018, Brussels
[158] Interview, 30 March 2017, Brussels

thorny issues in the negotiations and creating cooperation opportunities'.[159] As an EU senior negotiator remarked 'high-level missions serve to raise the visibility of GIs and enhance interest in GIs. The last two EU-China summits have been very important to keep the political momentum going and reinjected political energy into the negotiations'.[160] High-level formal meetings can often lead to compromise to overcome the challenges in the negotiations. Moreover, high-level missions between the EU and China raises the visibility of the negotiations at political level. Once the state of play of the negotiations are being 'monitored at the political level through institutionalised political mechanisms, especially the EU-China summits, decisive progress to conclude the negotiations can be envisaged'.[161] For example, in milestone three the technical level IPR dialogue was upgraded to vice-ministerial level which injected 'political energy' to the negotiations. When meetings are being reported to higher level meetings such as the HED, as a form of 'competence reporting', it establishes 'political link' between the negotiation parties and increase 'efficiency and clarification' in the negotiation.[162]

Informal meetings on the other hand are useful to build direct contact, discuss more technical issues and could ensure more transparency in the negotiations.[163] The lost and regained momentum throughout the decade long negotiations shows that 'the negotiation rounds should be made more frequent to increase contact between the two sides'.[164] As negotiations are about 'people-to-people contacts, it's very important to get to know the other side as well as to take time to familiarise with each other'.[165] Strong shared

[159] Interview, 16 March 2018, Brussels
[160] Interview, 7 March 2018, Brussels
[161] Interview, 20 March 2019, Brussels
[162] Interview, 23 February 2016, Beijing
[163] Interview, 22 March 2018, Brussels
[164] Interview, 3 December 2018, Beijing
[165] Interview via telephone, 24 July 2017

intentions generate a friendly climate that facilitate diplomatic talks, this is important to the extent that the effectiveness of the meetings depends on the 'ambiance at the time and the specific issues on the agenda'.[166] Shared intentions may not necessarily lead to common goal but they generate a 'we-feeling' that could incentivise common action.

As a process of managing EU-China shared intentions that underpins the overall EU-China relationship, the negotiations are also embedded in the changing dynamics of the wider development of EU-China relations that impacts the progress of the negotiations. Milestone one – the commencement of the negotiations took place amidst the restructuring of the world economy, and the EU and China's respective policy reforms. The discussions to start the negotiations was conceived around 2009, amid the financial crisis, yet the 'growth rates of China-EU trade – both import and export – in 2008 were higher than those between China and any other part of the world' which proved the 'huge potential in developing China-EU trade'.[167] This increased the confidence on both sides that 'the China-EU agricultural-trade was in a good trend' allowing both sides to 'focus on a balanced development of agricultural trade' and to develop initial talks on GIs.[168]

As EU negotiators commented, 'when the overall EU-China relations is running well, we can bring to the table more sensitive and complex issues for discussions […] It's like any strong relationship, you are not afraid of frank discussions about contentious issues breaking the relationship, because you know the relationship is sustainable and strong'.[169] Officials from both sides also share the view that relevant bilateral meetings in other policy areas of EU-China relations mentioning the ongoing GIs negotiations are 'a

[166] Interview, 2 July 2018, Brussels
[167] Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the EU-China Agriculture and Rural Development Dialogue, 2009
[168] Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the EU-China Agriculture and Rural Development Dialogue, 2009
[169] Interview, 20 March 2019, Brussels

necessity' to keep the momentum going, since 'good EU-China relations may incentivise GIs negotiators to seek consensus and agreement in a more positive environment', and a good progression of the negotiations may act as stimulus for the overall development of EU-China relations.[170] The achievement of one area of EU-China cooperation pervades the negotiations, it is 'a virtuous circle', as 'one can advance the momentum of one area of EU-China cooperation achievement and translate it into the GIs negotiations'.[171]

For example, milestone four of the negotiations, the publication of the *Joint Communiqué* and the list of 200 EU and Chinese GIs in 2017 was achieved against the backdrop of the overall positive development of EU-China trade and economic relations. The Agreement is expected to result in 'reciprocal trade benefits and increased consumers' awareness and demand for high-quality products on both sides'.[172] In the wider context of EU-China relations, the EU-China GIs Agreement is important for the development of EU-China economic and trade relations, since there is no FTA between the EU and China at the moment, the Agreement on GIs would be important for the EU and China to eventually sign a 'European-style FTA would mean making real changes' including 'progress on China's internal reforms, most importantly the goal of giving the market a more decisive role as a regulator'.[173] The European Commissioner for agriculture echoed this positivity that 'EU geographical indication products are a real success story, with growing global sales worldwide. […] Working closely with our global trading partners such as China is a win: it benefits out farmer and agri-businesses; it develops stronger trading relationships

[170] Interview with negotiators
[171] Interview, 25 March 2019, Brussels
[172] European Commission, *100 European geographical indications set to be protected in China*, Press Release IP/17/1507, Brussels, 2 June 2017
[173] European Commission – Speech, Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Trade, speech at China Association Event, London, 'The EU and China: trade and investment in the global economy', 25 February 2016

between like-minded operators; and of course, it benefits consumers on both sides of the agreement'.[174] The European Commissioner for Trade's speech at the EU-China Business Summit highlighted the importance of the GIs negotiation for strengthening EU-China trade relations: 'The European Union is China's largest trading partner and main investor. China's success is in Europe's interest. And we have made progress in our work together […] on geographical indications and intellectual property'.[175]

The shared commitment to negotiating the EU-China GIs Agreement embedded in EU-China shared intentions endowed the EU and China with a certain 'we-feeling' that untied the parties at times of challenges especially when shared interests and political momentum faltered during the decade long negotiations. EU-China shared intentions were crucial for negotiation breakthroughs. Negotiation can be considered as 'a psychological process setting up a kind of influence game between perceptions and expectations', the process of which and the wider process of building the relationship can be captured by the role of 'goal-expectations combination' (Dupont and Faure, 2002). And goals can be regarded as analogous to intentions (Miller and Tuomela, 2014). In the EU-China GIs negotiations, the pushing forces to overcome the challenges were often related to 'questions of leverage' and the commitment and intentions in both negotiation parties.[176] Although the deadlocks or frictions have become less numerous toward the end of the negotiations, when issues do occur, the problems are 'best to be put in the bigger picture of EU-China cooperation, the frictions are small in the wider cooperation between the EU and China'.[177] The EU-China shared commitment to reaching a win-win outcome were

[174] ibid.
[175] Speech by European Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmström at the 12th EU-China Business Summit, Brussels, 13 June 2017
[176] Interview, 7 April 2017, Brussels
[177] ibid.

crucial in enabling the EU and China to overcome the obstacles in the decade-long negotiations, and brought both parties together to seek compromise around the negotiating table.

The negotiations were embedded in the broader context of EU-China relations and were conducted in an increasingly complex global economy. As negotiators reflected, geo-economic changes shaping the international trading regime affected the negotiating processes, and 'depending on the geopolitical situation in the world, certain circumstances may bring the EU and China closer together depending on the shared undertakings in the matter'.[178] Within the broader EU-China context, EU-China GIs talks are influenced by China's rapid reform, and the scrutiny of the EU's own constituencies and voters.[179] As GIs concerns trade, legal and agricultural policies, problems arising in those areas of EU-China relations impeded the progression of the negotiation. There are inevitably influences of other areas of EU-China relations on the negotiations, as there is a combination of interests and objectives behind every issue on the negotiation agenda.[180] When certain problems become urgent top priority on the broader EU-China political agenda, 'it was very hard to push forward the negotiations'.[181] When certain issues of EU-China relations become an undercurrent of the EU-China formal negotiation rounds on geographical indications, the agenda of the negotiation could be diluted, rendering the outcome of the meeting less successful, and could even block the negotiations.

[178] Interview, 8 June 2018, Brussels
[179] Interview, 29 March 217, Brussels
[180] Interview, 27 April 2017, Brussels
[181] Interview, 10 June 2016, Brussels

5.5 Style

The decade-long negotiations were not only shaped by the structural dynamics and negotiations of complex technical and political substance, they were also influenced by the dialogue of EU and Chinese diplomatic styles. The theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building posits that the distinctive characteristics that define the EU and China's diplomacies influence EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. Diplomatic style is partly conditioned by the macro-level of the EU and China's diplomatic strategies vis-à-vis the specific policy issues under negotiation, and partly embedded in the cultural differences found at the micro-level of negotiating styles in international diplomacy (Cohen, 2007). It is expected that differences in EU and Chinese diplomatic styles would impede the development of EU-China shared intentions in diplomatic relationship-building; similarities in diplomatic styles enhances EU-China shared intentions and facilitates diplomatic relationship-building. In this theoretical light, at the macro-level and the micro-level, the extent to which the EU and China approximate each other in agricultural-trade policies intersects with the EU's disposition towards a 'low-context' negotiating style and China's cultural disposition towards a 'high-context' negotiating style. In the negotiations on GIs, stylistic consonance facilitated the development of EU-China shared intentions, manifested as the shared EU-China commitment to win-win agreement and enhanced reciprocity in EU-China trade ties, and enhanced the process of EU-China agricultural-trade relationship-building.

5.5.1 EU agricultural-trade diplomatic style

During the EU-China negotiations on GIs, the EU's agricultural-trade diplomacy displayed a 'walk the talk' diplomatic style *à la européenne*. At the macro-level, the EU's agricultural trade diplomatic strategy has been essential in driving the EU's negotiation

position in the GIs negotiations with China. The 'walk the talk' diplomatic style manifested in two key characteristics that shaped the process. More specifically, the EU's agricultural-trade diplomatic strategy is epitomised in the EU's 'walk the talk' ambitions in trade and agricultural policies. At the macro-level of diplomatic style, the first characteristics of the EU's agricultural-trade diplomatic style is the EU's commitment to open trade centring on a rules-based trade order; the second is the EU's 'old world approach to agricultural trade'.[182] The EU's 'agricultural policy is the oldest competence of the EU while the EU's trade policy is the second oldest competence of the EU and is the area in which the EU have obtained one of the highest degrees of internal coherence'.[183] In terms of trade, the EU operates with an 'underlying philosophy that in a multi-polar world, the EU must engage with emerging countries, and as China is the leading emerging country, the relationship with China is incredibly important'.[184] As one of the architects of the EU's trade diplomacy stated, the 'EU's diplomacy in trade is anchored in freedom and openness' which is at the heart of European integration. The common market of the EU is per definition in favour of 'libre exchange' (free exchange), the EU is committed to 'projecting this philosophy with the world, the more open trade is, the stronger trade ties would be'.[185]

The EU has been vocal in implementing a 'trade for all' strategy and being the avant-garde of more open and fairer trade. The EU's ambition lies in its belief that as 'the world's largest single market, its largest trader and investor and the largest provider of

[182] Interview, Brussels, 22 March 2018
[183] Interview, Permanent Representation of a member state to the European Union, 13 March 2017, Brussels
[184] Interview, 7 April 2017, Brussels
[185] Interview, 10 August 2018

development assistance, Europe can shape the global rulebook'.[186] This 'trade for all' strategy based on a rules-based trading order has been pursued through means of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements. Since November 2014, the EU has concluded and started implementing 'new balanced trade agreements' with 15 partners and the EU has trade with 72 countries around the world under 41 existing agreements.[187] The EU's attitude being open to trade underpins all EU trade negotiations, and in the negotiations the EU negotiates on the basis to protect the 'high standards in EU and we [the EU] expects the same high standards of our trading partners. We [the EU] will not compromise on our standards for any trade agreement'.[188] This rationale has been one of the strongest strands running through the EU-China negotiations on GIs, manifest in the EU's way of ensuring EU-China cooperation on GIs is a two-way relationship

The EU's style in agricultural trade is closely associated with the EU's pursuit of multilateralism. Multilateral cooperation remains the EU's preferred approach and in so doing, the EU hopes to 'continue taking the lead, projecting its values and interests and promoting a 'race-to-the-top' approach.[189] As the EU's global strategy stated, 'the EU will be a responsible global stakeholder, but responsibility must be shared and […] co-responsibility will be our guiding principle in advancing a rules-based global order' (European Union, 2016, p.18). Moreover, the EU believes that 'healthy economic and trade diplomacy is about finding common grounds and comprises', the EU wants China to 'engage in the WTO and its regulations, and to grow sustainably in the environmental,

[186] European Commission, *Reflection paper on harnessing globalisation*, COM(2017) 240, 10 May 2017, p.14
[187] European Commission, *Open and fair trade in a rules-based global system*: *towards a more united, stronger and more democratic union*, March 2018
[188] Remarks by Commissioner Phil Hogan at the 2018 EU Agricultural Outlook conference, Brussels, 6 December 2018
[189] European Commission, *Reflection paper on harnessing globalisation*, COM(2017) 240, 10 May 2017, p.13

economic and social areas'.[190] The EU's pursuit of developing a rules-based trade agenda and opening markets in a reciprocal way has been driving the EU-China agricultural-trade relationship. The EU pursues a 'realistic and multi-faceted approach with a view to ensuring fair, balanced and mutually-beneficial relations with China. The EU will work for a more balanced economic relationship with China while at the same time pursue deeper engagement on global and multilateral issues, including reform of the World Trade Organisation'.[191] Furthermore, the EU's trade diplomacy does not exist as a 'stiff policy, it is more about developing an approach and translating it into action'. [192] The implementation of EU trade diplomacy is 'a horizontal framework of cooperation and a process of bottom-up and top-down diplomacies entailing EU institutions' close coordination with member states and a thorough consultation process with stakeholders, to ensure increasing coherence in the EU's trade diplomacy.'[193]

The EU's 'walk the talk' diplomatic style exhibited in the EU-China GIs negotiations is also underpinned by its 'old world approach' to agricultural trade in general, and the protection of GIs in particular. In essence, the EU's 'old world approach' to the protection of GIs centres on the ethos that products produced in their respective territories reflect the rich diversity of different traditions and regions, and that there is a need of absolute protection and preservation of the reputation and character of the product bearing that name, against unauthorised use. This 'old world approach' is about preserving European traditions and diversity of food cultures and cultural heritage.[194] The 'old world approach'

[190] Interview, 10 August 2018
[191] European Commission, *EU-China Summit: Rebalancing the strategic partnership*, Press Release IP/19/2055, Brussels, 9 April 2019
[192] Interview, 31 May 2017, Brussels
[193] Interview, 26 May 2016, Brussels
[194] Interview, 31 May 2017, Brussels

is linked to the fact that 'the idea of GIs was created in Europe'.[195] The value of GIs in the EU is so high to the extent that GIs are even associated with the identity of the EU, that the protection of GIs are firmly anchored in the EU's quality policy and common agricultural policy.[196] The EU's quality policy denotes that GIs are part of the cultural heritage of the EU and GIs as important intellectual property 'play an increasingly important role in trade negotiations between the EU and other countries'.[197] And at the heart of Europe's approach to GIs is 'the idea of *terroir* — that there is an essential nexus between a product's characteristics and the place it was made' (Watson, 2016). This approach is not traditionally appreciated or operated in 'newer countries such as the United States and Australia'.[198] From the EU perspective, GIs 'enable consumers who are sensitive to the tradition and special characteristics in the GI product to make informed choices. Consumers want to know what brand they are buying, this is not 'branding' in the traditional sense, but a broader understanding of 'branding'. The EU believes that GIs can help consumers make wiser food choices'.[199]

The EU has shown its 'walk the talk' diplomatic style in being the leader in international efforts to enhance the protection of GIs. The EU has been 'at the forefront of the effort to expand GI protection', as a former EU trade commissioner stated 'the future of European agriculture lies not in quantity of exports but quality… That is why we are fighting to stop appropriation of the image of our products and improve protection' (cited in Raustiala and Munzer, 2007, p. 350). The 'advanced protection of European GIs represents an alternative

[195] Interview, Beijing, 26 February 2016
[196] Interview, 7 March 2018, Brussels
[197] Aims of EU quality schemes, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/food-safety-and-quality/certification/quality-labels/quality-schemes-explained_en
[198] Interview, 22 March 2018, Brussels
[199] Interview, 25 July 2016, Beijing

strategy to maintain European market shares throughout the world' which can be best achieved though bilateral agreements (Engelhardt, 2015). The core of the EU's GIs diplomacy is protecting GIs through bilateral agreements. The objective is to obtain a protection of EU GIs higher than the level covered under the WTO's TRIPS. One prime example is the integration of geographical indications in recent EU trade agreements with South Korea and in the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, through 'the integration of standards in new bilateral trade agreements. They represent milestones regarding the inclusion of GIs and the increased protection of GIs in international trade agreements'. [200] Indeed, the 'international trade dimension of agriculture remains of utmost significance to European farmers and the European economy – Europe is the world's biggest trader of agricultural products' (European Commission, 12 March 2012). And GIs have become an important component of the EU's bilateral trade with third parties. The EU walking the talk in enhancing protection of GIs at the global level finds its expression in the EU pursuing a level playing field between the EU and China. The EU 'prioritises the protection of GIs in all countries and believe that Chinese GIs will benefit from EU protection and vice versa.[201] This logic of reciprocity has been at the core of the EU-China negotiations on GIs. Moreover, the EU's tendency to privilege Europe's 'power of attraction' and normative power over 'hard power', as well as 'persuasion' over 'enforcement' predispose the EU to conduct its diplomacy differently and distinctively in the world, and in its relationship with China.[202]

The macro-level unique characteristics of the EU's diplomatic style in agricultural trade cannot be dissociated from the micro-level EU diplomatic style, manifest in the EU's way

[200] *Research for AGRI Committee-Agricultural trade: assessing reciprocity of standards*, p.18, available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/617477/IPOL_STU(2018)617477_EN.pdf
[201] Interview, 5 April 2017, Brussels
[202] Interview, 2 July 2018, Brussels

of negotiation. The EU's distinctive way of agricultural-trade diplomacy stems from the European disposition towards a low-context negotiation style that values diplomatic skills and persuasion. As Cohen purported 'a low-context negotiating style' is direct and explicit in communication. The micro-level EU style is influenced by the *modus operandi* of the EU that contributed to the distinctiveness of EU style diplomacy in agricultural trade. The EU's style of conducting diplomacy is a different type of diplomacy characterised by consensus building and informality being a norm, many decisions are reached during informal discussions.[203] This aspect of the EU's diplomacy is valued as 'une diplomatie commune' (a common or collaborative diplomacy) in the sense that all EU's external relations act on behalf of the European Union as a whole and not the EU member states (Lefebvre, 2016, p.93).

The EU's 'institutional architecture' which is anchored in the Commission-Council-Parliament configuration impacts the EU's way of negotiating.[204] The EU treaties denote that negotiation provisions are shared among all institutions, and when ambiguity occurs in the negotiations, all relevant institutions are informed which could render EU negotiations to be a lengthy process. This was indeed the case in the case of EU-China negotiations on GIs, after every formal round of negotiations, DG AGRI reported back to the trade network in Brussels including the Council's Trade Policy Committee and the Parliament's Committee on international affairs and other relevant stakeholders.[205]

[203] Interview, 21 March 2019, Brussels
[204] Interview, 18 May 2016, Brussels.
[205] Interview, 16 March 2018, Brussels

5.5.2 Chinese agricultural-trade diplomatic style

Chinese agricultural-trade diplomacy exhibited a 'shoulder responsibility' (负责任) diplomatic style in the GIs negotiations with the EU. This agricultural-trade diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is underpinned by China's aspirations for being a responsible great power (负责任大国) and influenced by it being a developing country from a Chinese perspective. China's growing engagement in global governance, and taking up more responsibility in international affairs has been the strongest strand running through Chinese diplomatic thinking. With China's growing economic weight in the world, it is expected of China to engage more in international affairs.[206] Yet, China's diplomacy is underscored by the impact of China's 'local situation' (国情) on China's path to modernisation and reforms. China's international obligations are contingent upon China being a developing country with its limitations.[207]

At the macro-level, China's agricultural-trade diplomacy is driven by China's commitment to shoulder responsibility for reciprocal trade with a rules-based trade order at its core. This is related with the 'reaffirmed Chinese confidence in a redefined role as both a committed fulfiller of obligations and a gradually reformist member' in international trade (Wu, 2007). From China's perspective, China has been fulling its global responsibilities since the WTO accession through tariff cuts and opening of the sectors.[208] China has 'had low tariffs on agricultural products for most commodities since its accession to the WTO' and China is 'committed to opening up agricultural products to the outside world' (OECD, 2018, p.149). Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) are platforms to 'further opening up to the outside and speeding up domestic reforms', trade agreements are 'an effective approach'

[206] Interview, Beijing, 17 November2017
[207] Interview, Beijing, 16 July 2016
[208] Interview, Brussels, 25 March 2019

for China to 'integrate into global economy and strengthen economic cooperation with other economies'.[209] China's 24 FTAs in negotiation, among which 16 Agreements have been signed and implemented,[210] are a testimony to China's shouldering opening-trade responsibility diplomatic style.

One distinguishing feature of Chinese agricultural-trade diplomacy is that the formulation and implementation of which should be in service of China's economic development. China's agricultural trade diplomacy vis-à-vis the EU therefore should serve its domestic development. Economic development is the most important issue on China's domestic agenda.[211] China's economic policy and development strategy imprint on China's agricultural trade policy (Yao, 2006), its 'domestic economic development' and 'China's role in the international community' influence the development of China-EU relations (Song, 2009). Since China's accession to the WTO in 2001, China's agricultural policy has been based on the rules of the WTO and is international in its outlook. As the largest developing member country in the WTO, China is no longer a low-key player lacking a clear position in WTO agriculture negotiations (Yao, 2006). China has 'transformed from a passive taker of international intellectual property norms to one that slowly assumed the additional roles of both a norm shaker and a norm maker' (Yu, 2013).

The Chinese agricultural trade diplomatic style expresses itself in the form of China actively learning from European experiences to modernise its system so as to enhance agricultural-trade policies. As a chief negotiator noted, working with the EU, 'a partner that is more advanced in the trading system and in the field of geographical indications

[209] China FTA network, available at: http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/english/index.shtml
[210] ibid.
[211] Interview, Beijing, 30 October 2018

policies has provided China with strong incentives to strengthen China's system to protect agri-food.[212] There is a general understanding in China that the EU's agricultural policy is more advanced than that of China, the EU possesses the tools and means to protect its agricultural sector, which is why China is learning from the EU. China has incorporated the EU's *sui generis* system into its legal system of protecting GIs. In that regard, China has experienced rapid development over the past years and benefited from its collaboration with the EU.[213] Furthermore, China understands that the EU values preserving traditional know-how and cultural heritage. China also appreciates the cultural values underlying the protection of GIs and the contribution of which to the development of the agricultural sector, in this sense, the rationale to protect GIs are of 'mutual benefit' (共同利益) for both China and the EU.[214]

China's strategy for seeking protection of high-quality products highlights the importance of market access and the institutional reform of GI governance (Ilbert, 2012). China's vast territory and rich history have produced many 'local specialities' ('地方特产', '老字号'), the number of GIs in China is fast growing, and the registration protection process has been improved. Although the legal concept of geographical indication, and the current system of intellectual property protection including GIs in China were introduced mainly after China's accession to the WTO, with less than 30 years in practice (Wang and Kireeva, 2014). There is increasing emphasis on the protection of traditional agricultural products in China. The rich cultural heritage of China and long history of local specialties underpin this rationale. In this regard, the Chinese approach to GIs is similar to the 'old world

[212] Interview, Beijing, 25 July 2016
[213] Interview, 8 July 2016, Beijing
[214] Interview, 8 July 2016, Beijing

approach' characteristic of the EU.[215]

China has increasingly come to shoulder responsibility in trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights. The protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights became an increasing conscious choice in China in parallel with China's growing economic and technology development. 'Greater participation in the intellectual property arena is partly due to the 'growing awareness of the economic and strategic importance of a well-functioning intellectual property system' (Wu, 2009; Yu, 2013). A well-developed intellectual property protection system could attract greater foreign direct investment. This has also been a driving force in the EU-China negotiations on GIs, that the Agreement would enable China to be a more confident and assertive player in the international IP area.[216]

At the micro-level, the way in which China negotiates and pursues diplomatic objectives made a difference in the EU-China GIs negotiations. The distinguishing characteristics of Chinese diplomacy at the micro-level of diplomatic practices is its quintessentially 'high-context' negotiation style. According to Cohen, a high-context negotiating style is characterised by an emphasis on relationship-building and indirect communication (Cohen, 1997). Chinese diplomats prioritise the 'principles of protocol' and prefer to employ formal diplomatic channels. While Chinese negotiators will use all available channels of communication – including unofficial track-two channels to foster progress, their focus remains on preserving the prerogatives of the official track-one channel (Solomon 1995; Foot, 2000). The respect of protocol and formality in China's diplomacy is engrained in Chinese culture. As experienced EU diplomats have noted, China is 'very formal in its

[215] Interview, Beijing, 30 October 2018
[216] Interview, Beijing, 23 February 2016

international relations'.[217]

But there is also a 'softer' element in Chinese diplomatic style, a certain type of emotional element in Chinese diplomacy. And 'any analysis of Chinese diplomacy that leaves out the powerful role of emotion fails to capture the whole story. The somewhat inhuman, impersonal, and highly calculated façade of the agents, institutions and actors of China's international relations mask the central role of emotion – but it is undeniably there' (Brown, 2013). Indeed, as Hall argues certain issues are deeply emotional in Chinese domestic and international politics (Hall, 2011). This emotional diplomacy is intentional and attempts to invoke key values, and can influence how 'a state is perceived, projecting a specific image of its intentions, beliefs, and values', moreover, emotional actors provides a means for state actors to attempt to shape perceptions to their benefits, to influence an audience for the purpose of achieving desired ends (Hall, 2015). In the case of the negotiations on geographical indications between China and the EU, positive emotions about showcasing both China and Europe's long histories and rich cultures played a positive role in the long process of negotiations.[218]

China's agricultural-trade negotiation style has also evolved over the past decade, as many negotiators have observed. On economic and technical issues, the Chinese are increasingly accommodating to Western negotiating standards and norms (Kreisburg, 1994; 2006, p. 457). And China is increasingly discarding the 'old' style of negotiation and an increasingly 'modern' style of conducting diplomatic talks (Kreisberg 2006). The Chinese negotiating style is influenced by its institutional and cultural characteristics (Robinson and Shambaugh, 2006). For example, China's Foreign Ministry is no longer the sole

[217] Interview, Beijing, 24 February 2016
[218] Interview, 21 April 2017, Brussels

negotiating partner. The decision-making system is less centralised and functional expertise is frequently sought out by high-ranking leaders' (Foot, 2000). In short, at the micro-level understanding of diplomatic style, China's style of negotiation and diplomatic practices is embedded in its political culture and diplomatic philosophy.

5.5.3 Diplomatic styles and EU-China shared intentions in EU-China agricultural-trade diplomacy

Proposition three in the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building suggests that stylistic dissonance impedes the development of shared intentions and are not conducive to diplomatic relationship-building. Stylistic consonance however facilitates shared intentions to develop, and are conducive to diplomatic relationship-building. In this light, the differences and the similarities in the diplomatic styles that diverge and converge between the EU and China reveal important factors that have been largely ignored in explaining EU-China agricultural-trade relationship-building. The shared intentions manifest as the joint EU-China commitment to reciprocity and 'win-win' agreement were crucial in driving the process of the near decade-long negotiations agricultural-trade relationship-building. The following analysis will delve deeper into the consonance and dissonance between the EU and Chinese agricultural-trade diplomatic styles manifest in EU-China GIs negotiations.

Retracing the way in which the EU and China negotiated the landmark EU-China GIs Agreement shows that similarities in EU and Chinese agricultural-trade diplomatic styles at the macro-level facilitated the development of EU-China shared intentions. The engine driving the negotiations forward lies in the similarities between Chinese and EU diplomatic strategies to agricultural trade, and the protection of geographical indications in

particular. The Agreement is 'a concrete example of cooperation between the European Union and the People's Republic of China, reflecting the openness and adherence of both sides to international rules as a basis for trade relations'.[219] Central to the diplomatic strategies towards agricultural trade adopted by both sides are the way in which the EU and China both value open and reciprocal trade, and both the EU and China advocate and support a rules-based approach to international trade. The EU is committed to being 'a leading advocate of an open and rules-based trading system' with a 'balanced and progressive trade policy to harness globalization'.[220] And that 'there is strong demand for Europe throughout the world. […] to get off the side-lines of world affairs. Europe must be an active player, and architect of tomorrow's world'.[221] China's commitment to international trade was emphasised at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2017, in which China reaffirmed that 'integration into the global economy is a historical trend. To grow its economy, China must have the courage to swim in the vast ocean of the global market'.[222] In relation to agricultural trade, the EU and China 'recognise their responsibility to lead by example, pursue policies that support an open, balanced, and inclusive global economy which is beneficial to all, and encourage trade and investment'.[223] EU-China negotiations on GIs are based on the shared commitment to 'the rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core', the EU and China share the objective of 'equitable and

[219] European Commission. Landmark agreement will protect 100 European geographical indications in China, Press release, IP/19/6200

[220] *Factsheets on the Commission's 10 priorities,* available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/euco-sibiu-factsheets-commission-10-priorities_en_3.pdf

[221] European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, State of the Union address, 12 September 2018

[222] 'Jointly shoulder responsibility of our times, promote global growth', speech at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2017

[223] EU-China Summit Joint Statement, Brussels, 9 April 2019, available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/39020/euchina-joint-statement-9april2019.pdf

mutually beneficial cooperation in bilateral trade and investment'.[224]

Moreover, as enshrined in the *Joint Statement: Deepening the EU-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for mutual benefit,* both the EU and China 'share responsibility for ensuring that their economies remain key drivers for global economic growth and providing prosperity for all'. The EU and China share the 'commitment to an open global economy and a fair, transparent and rules-based trade and investment environment, opposing protectionism. […] and their commitment to create the conditions for enhancing trade and investment exchanges on the basis of mutual benefit'. In this light of the EU and China 'sharing responsibilities to jointly maintain the multilateral system, the key is to find the right balance between EU-responsibilities and Chinese responsibilities, and jointly act in a results-oriented way'.[225] This 'results-oriented way' was achieved in light of the consonance between the EU and China's diplomatic styles, as negotiators commented that in the negotiations on GIs, the EU has knowledge and expertise in terms of GIs, while China has keen interest to learn. Stylistic consonance facilitated EU-China negotiations in geographical indications, and enhanced EU-China agricultural-trade relationship-building.

A strong sense of similarity also exists between the EU and China with regard to their quality policies and their commitment to the protection of agricultural products and geographical indications. For both the EU and China, 'agricultural trade and domestic policies are mutually supportive, with the need to balance domestic factors closely linked to the protection of quality products and external factors concerning the developments in

[224] European Commission, Press Release, *EU-China Summit: Rebalancing the strategic partnership, Brussels*, 9 April 2019, available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-2055_en.htm
[225] Interview, Brussels, 25 March 2019

the world trading patterns in agriculture.[226] Negotiating the Agreement on GIs has been a top priority for maintaining fairness and open trade for the EU and China. The EU and China share the 'old world approach' to protecting geographical indications that is embedded in Europe and China's rich cultural heritage and long traditions. As explained earlier, the 'old world approach' is essentially the agricultural-trade strategy adopted by the 'old continent' of Europe and China that values the protection of quality products. This approach is in stark contrast to the American agricultural-trade diplomatic style, where there is a general absence of belief in the value of GIs.[227] In this sense even the inception of negotiating an ambitious Agreement on GIs 'shows the converging views of the European Union and China on matters related to quality policy, consumer protection and intellectual property'.[228] This 'old world approach' that the EU and China both adopt is underpinned by a rich food culture, that bonding and connecting over a meal is valuable in European and Chinese societies, which 'links us [the EU and China] in a certain way'.[229]

The EU-China negotiations on GIs elicit more cooperation then contention, as 'there is no substantial differences in the European and Chinese approaches'.[230] Indeed, both China and the EU share the desire to protect and promote products with particular characteristics linked to their geographical origin as well as traditional products. Both the EU and China recognise the economic value and cultural significance of GIs. The concept of '*terroir*' in the European culture may be unique, but the negotiations on GIs have enhanced cultural understanding between Europeans and Chinese. Moreover, 'the complementarities in the

[226] Minutes of the third Meeting of the EU-China Dialogue on Agriculture and Rural Development, 2008
[227] Interview, Washington DC, 5 November 2017
[228] Roadmap title of the initiative Proposal for a Council Decision on the signature of an Agreement between the European Union and the People's Republic of China on cooperation on, and protection of, geographical indications
[229] Interview with EU and Chinese negotiators
[230] Interview, 24 July 2017

patterns of production' between the EU and China have presented a constant positive force in the diplomacy between the two sides, and facilitated the EU and China to achieve a more balanced pattern in their agricultural-trade diplomacy. There is an increasing 'convergence' between the EU and China's diplomatic strategies in protecting geographical indications since the negotiations commenced.[231] These similarities in diplomatic styles act as reinforcing factors in the strengthening of shared EU-China intentions, transforming EU-China agricultural-trade relations into a 'more pragmatic and closer relationship in agriculture'.[232]

The stylist similarities in agricultural-trade diplomacy between the EU and China is also manifest in their similar desire to be responsible traders in international economic diplomacy. One high-level EU trade diplomat elaborated on this, 'the EU has always taken the initiative to defend the multilateral system through improving its own system and trade negotiations. China has been the best example of being a trader in-between a developed country and a developing country. For both the EU and China, trade-opening is the path to achieving long-term policy objectives and short-term goals'.[233] The EU's 'walk the talk' diplomatic style and China's 'shoulder responsibility' diplomatic style converge in agricultural trade which allows both sides to maximize opportunities to build synergies, as both sides 'recognise their responsibility to lead by example, pursue policies that support an open, balanced, and inclusive global economy which is beneficial to all, and encourage trade and investment'.[234]

These similarities generate a predisposition for both the EU and China to find consensus

[231] Interview, 2 November 2018
[232] European Commission, *EU-China Cooperation Plan in Agriculture and Rural Development*
[233] Interview, Brussels, 26 March 2019
[234] Ibid.

on negotiation objectives, which was decisive in overcoming the many hurdles in the decade-long negotiations. As Chinese negotiators have noted '如果欧方有合作意向，我们也有合作意向' (if the EU has the intention and will to cooperate. We will be willing to do so as well).[235] The shared intentions that the EU and China developed throughout the negotiations was manifest in their commitment to 'ensure equitable and mutually beneficial cooperation in bilateral trade and investment', and their 'willingness to enhance bilateral economic cooperation, trade and investment and to provide each other with broader and more facilitated, non-discriminatory market access'.[236] The EU and China 'commit to build their economic relationship on openness, non-discrimination, and fair competition, ensuring a level playing field, transparency, and based on mutual benefits'.[237]

Furthermore, stylistic consonance in EU-China agricultural-trade diplomacy was also driven by an 'interplay of cooperation and competition between the EU and China', which presented 'opportunities for the EU and China to learn from each other, but also a healthy competition that can deliver good results'.[238] Indeed, the similarities in the EU and China's agricultural-trade diplomacies enabled the EU and China to increase efforts to facilitate trade in agriculture products and deepen their diplomatic ties in agricultural trade. While the exchange of technical experiences provided valuable lessons enabling both sides to better manage the negotiations in a way more beneficial to both the EU and China.[239] The strengthening of EU-China shared intentions, manifest in their commitment to reciprocal and rules-based trade, saw the EU and China enter a 'new phase' in their relationship which was guided by the shared principles regarding 'shared global

[235] Interview, 8 July 2016, Beijing
[236] EU-China Summit Joint Statement, Brussels, 9 April 2019, available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/39020/euchina-joint-statement-9april2019.pdf
[237] Ibid.
[238] Interview, Brussels, 25 March 2019
[239] Interview, 26 March 2019

responsibilities, openness and transparency and a relationship based on reciprocity'.[240] This shared commitment was evident in the build-up to the draft agreement in 2017. The EU reinstated that 'the fundamental principle of the EU's relationship with China is that it should be based on reciprocal benefit in both political and economic terms. It [the relationship] will continue to be based on a positive agenda of partnership coupled with the constructive management of differences'.[241] The deepening of EU-China shared intentions manifest as their shared belief in that 'openness and reciprocity go hand-in-hand' and 'reciprocity in market access and transparency are key to achieving a level playing in the bilateral trade relations'.[242] The high level of shared EU-China commitment to open and fair trade is reflected in the ambitious Agreement.[243]

Yet, the negotiations were not always smooth sailing. Differences in diplomatic styles and especially cultural dissonance rendered the strengthening of EU-China shared intentions difficult, and was a contributing factor in the continuous extension of the negotiations. The cultural dissonance that the EU and China displayed rendered it sometimes challenging for the two to act in concert and build relationships that conveyed a strong 'we-ness'. At the macro-level of diplomatic style, the stylistic differences between the EU and China in protecting GIs is underpinned by the different institutional and legal structures that enable the protection of GIs, and the types of GIs under negotiation from both sides. EU GIs are mainly higher value added agri-food products, while Chinese GIs mainly are primarily raw products. The differences between the EU and China on this issue are not matters of

[240] *The European Union and China's relationship enters a new phase*, Hans-Dietmar Schweisgut, Ambassador of the European Union to China, speech at the European Chamber Annual Conference 2016 'Globalisation in Retreat: Risks and Opportunities for China', 14 December 2016
[241] Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Elements for a new EU strategy on China, Brussels, 22.6.2016 JOIN(2016) 30 final
[242] *The European Union and China's relationship enters a new phase*, Hans-Dietmar Schweisgut, Ambassador of the European Union to China, speech at the European Chamber Annual Conference 2016 'Globalisation in Retreat: Risks and Opportunities for China', 14 December 2016
[243] Interview, Brussels, 10 June 2016

principle, as both sides believe in 'the importance of following international standards in intellectual property protection and enforcement' and they continue to 'work towards tangible results in the mutually agreed priority areas'.[244] Nevertheless, compared to Europe, *la pensée chinoise* (the Chinese way of thinking) in agricultural trade is 'more pragmatic and the Chinese legal framework for protecting GIs is still in development compared to that of the EU'.[245] Through the negotiations, China is learning from the EU's experiences and best practices to develop its GIs protection system.[246]

At the micro-level of diplomatic style, stylist dissonance in the conduct of diplomacy has major implications for the building of the EU-China relationship. As detailed in the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building, shared intentions are vital in the making of diplomatic relationships which may open up alternative pathways for negotiation parties to seek cooperation when their negotiation styles are culturally different. The Chinese way of negotiation is different from the EU's. This micro-level of diplomatic style finds its expression in the 'low-context' and 'high-context' negotiating styles (Cohen, 2007). Cohen purports that at the 'conceptual and practical levels', there exist two different negotiating ethos characterised as the 'low-context (individualistic) and high-context (relationship-oriented) styles' (Cohen, 2007). These two styles can be found on the spectrum of the characteristic features that most distinguishes a country's negotiating approach from others. The European way of negotiation falls in the category of 'low-context' style while China's negotiation style is quintessentially 'high-context'. As negotiation is influenced by the 'behavioural discrepancies when persons of different cultural backgrounds are brought together' (Sawyer and Guetzkow, 1965, p.502). Cultural

[244] EU-China Summit Joint Statement, Brussels, 9 April 2019
[245] Interview, 10 August 2018, Brussels
[246] Interview, Beijing, 3 December 2018

differences become more salient as barriers to communication and misunderstandings when people of different cultures interact (Berton, Kimura and Zartman, 1999, p.133). The cultural differences between China and other societies are evident and have effect on interpersonal relationships in negotiations (Kreisberg, 2006, p. 453).

The contrasting negotiation styles that the EU and China exhibited in the negotiation accentuated the challenges entailed for the developing of EU-China shared intentions. In particular, the stylistic differences in the way in which the EU and China pursued their negotiation objectives underscored the challenges in strengthening EU-China shared intentions. The Chinese negotiation style entails negotiators having a specific mandate to promote certain issues, and 'decisions come from the very top'. This top-down style was potent and influential in terms of building contact and trust between both EU and Chinese chief negotiators.[247] For example, the 2015-2016 period that was marked by negotiation stalemate was overcome by the change of the chief negotiators on both sides. For the EU, negotiations and consensus building are omnipresent in the day-to-day activities and essential to its functioning. The intensity of EU negotiations between the various institutions ensure that negotiations among its member states and EU-level institutions could 'facilitate cooperation by fostering trust or perhaps even a common [EU] identity' (Lewis, 2005). The EU's style around the negotiation table means 'the negotiators have more lee-way and has much room for negotiation on the spot', for the Chinese, 'there is only certain amount of compromise possible around the negotiation table, most decisions have already been decided or pre-cooked prior to the actual formal negotiations'.[248]

This meeting of 'low-context' and 'high-context' negotiation styles is important to the

[247] Interview, 30 March 2017, Brussels
[248] ibid.

extent that reaching diplomatic agreement is not only based on finding consonance in the policy issues, but also in finding consonance in the different the ways of communication and building mutual understanding. Senior EU negotiators remarked that an effective way of overcoming the differences in negotiation styles and building relationship with China was about 'finding the balance between what the EU wants and what is also in the interests of China's development'.[249] This way of 'how the EU can be part of the solution to China's problems' facilitated the EU's way of talking with China and fostered mutual understanding that were crucial for the progress of the negotiations.

The dissonance between China's 'high-context' diplomatic style and the EU's 'low-context' diplomatic style rendered it difficult to enhance shared intentions in the diplomatic relationship-building process. The micro-level style not only matters for the top leaders and chief negotiators during the highest-level of diplomatic summitries, but also in the day-to-day, more detailed contacts which may be less useful to help build trust between parties.[250] When the differences of communication is too rigid, there may be less compromises reached in the negotiations; when the EU and China demonstrate more similarities in communication, trust-building is easier, and when both sides demonstrate 'candidness, pragmatism and friendliness' on agricultural cooperation, the 'communication, mutual respect, trust and understanding would build the foundation for cooperation'.[251] Mutual understanding and the importance of strong political commitment were emphasised during the most recent EU-China summit in 2019, 'the honesty and a strong determination to face our challenges together have allowed us to make real progress […] We [the EU and China] need to find a better balance and level of reciprocity […] we need rules that allow

[249] Interview, Brussels, 9 December 2016
[250] Interview, 10 June 2016, Brussels
[251] Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the EU-China Agriculture and Rural Development Dialogue, 2009

us to do so. We want to work with China, because we believe in the potential of our partnership.'[252]

The interplay of China-style and EU-style agricultural-trade diplomacies influenced the dynamics of EU-China shared intentions in the negotiations. Stylistic consonance pushed forward the alignment of political and technical objectives and the development of shared intentions. The process of EU-China agricultural-trade negotiations shows variations of shared intentions during different stages of the negotiations. The early phase of the negotiations was akin to 'pre-negotiation' that tested the commitment from both sides to reach the same political lines before the more challenging, technical discussions took place. The EU-style diplomacy exhibited more 'taking the lead' in the talks, while China showed openness to learning from EU practices. During the second phase of the negotiation, in which more complex substance was addressed, involving both technical and political discussions, EU-China shared intentions contributed to building the momentum of the development of EU-China agricultural-trade relations. The final phase of the negotiations saw the EU and China reach consensus, which laid the foundation for building a more trust-based and mature relationship. The micro-level stylistic characteristics embedded in 'Chinese and European cultural differences do not play a major role in the negotiations' although both sides 'recognise the changing dynamics of negotiation behaviours'. [253] The salience of the micro-level stylistic differences between the EU and China do not eclipse the stylistic similarities found at the macro-level diplomatic styles between the EU and China in agricultural trade. In brief, diplomatic style, the way in which the EU and China

[252] Remarks of President Juncker at the joint press conference with Mr Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, and Mr Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, following the EU-China Summit, Brussels, 9 April 2019

[253] Interview, 20 March 2018, Brussels

work impacts on transforming dialogue to action.[254] The key to relationship-building between different diplomatic styles is the development of shared intentions. In this dialogue of diplomatic styles, shared intentions operate not only at the macro-level of China and the EU's diplomatic style in agricultural trade; but also operate at the micro-level of negotiations, manifest in the way in which negotiators relate to each other and their distinct negotiations styles.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored EU-China diplomatic relationship-building through the negotiations of the landmark agreement between the EU and China – *the Agreement on Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications*. Guided by the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building, the chapter has illustrated the importance of the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building in interpreting how the EU and China negotiated this landmark agreement, and the making of EU-China agricultural-trade relations.

The making of EU-China agricultural-trade relations was not a linear process. The Agreement has been in the making for nearly a decade involving a plethora of institutional actors, a multitude of institutional mechanisms, and highly technical, political multi-stage negotiation rounds. In essence, the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building in agricultural trade was a process of the development of shared intentions which was made possible by the three constitutive elements of structural cooperation, complex substance negotiations and interplay of EU and Chinese diplomatic styles. EU-China

[254] Interview, 20 March 2019, Brussels

shared intentions were crucial in the negotiations as they conjured in existence a 'we-feeling' between the EU and China, and incentivised the EU and China to pursue the desired 'win-win' Agreement. Shared intentions pervaded all facets of the relationship-building process. The varied intensity of EU-China shared intentions during the negotiations indicate varying degrees of closeness between the EU and China. The strengthening of shared intentions was instrumental in the dynamics of the negotiations, in many ways, the process of the GIs negotiation and the wider process of building EU-China agricultural-trade relations can be considered as a process of cultivating EU-China shared intentions.

The chapter disentangled the web of institutional actors and institutional mechanisms contributing to the negotiations and revealed the dynamics of the institutional dialogue in EU-China agricultural-trade relations. The differences in governance structure, regulatory and legal systems regarding GIs between the EU and China highlight the paramount importance of effective coordination and leadership in building EU-China relations. In essence, structural coordination activates the process of diplomatic relationship-building and the creation of shared intentions. A balanced and effective structural coordination was almost a prerequisite for the EU and China to share knowledge on GIs registration and protection, especially during the 'Pilot Project' phase of the negotiations where both sides strengthened coordination through intense technical talks. The near decade-long negotiation process was, in many ways, a process of developing shared intentions between the EU and China through balanced structural coordination. The balanced structural coordination among the plethora of institutional actors in the 'centrality' and the 'periphery' of EU-China agricultural-trade network contributed to the EU and China building stronger shared intentions. Structural coordination created opportunities for both

sides to develop familiarity, understanding, and thereby reinforced and deepened shared understanding and commitment to reaching win-win outcome in the negotiations.

The negotiated Agreement was a process of the gradual alignment of EU and China's diplomatic objectives. The alignment of political and technical objectives was crucial for the development of EU-China shared intentions. The 'Pilot Project' negotiation consolidated the alignment of political objectives and confidence in the shared commitment to a 'win-win' Agreement between the EU and China. It was a testing of shared intentions and commitment in the negotiations. The breakthroughs in the technical stages of the talks were achieved through the EU and China amending their negotiation preferences, which was accelerated by the EU-China shared intentions to reach a 'win-win' agreement. As EU-China shared intentions become stronger, both sides could overcome complex negotiation hurdles. The deepest and strongest expression of shared intentions in EU-China relations manifested in the shared commitment to a win-win Agreement and enhanced reciprocal trade ties, which were often propelled by high-level political talks and missions during the near-decade long negotiations. Sino-European diplomatic relationship-building in the area of agricultural trade entailed the EU and China navigating different negotiation objectives and complex technical and political priorities. The strengthening of EU-China shared intentions during the process manifested as increasing engagement, reciprocity and openness in EU-China agricultural-trade ties.

Achieving consonance in EU and Chinese diplomatic styles in agricultural trade were equally important in the process. At the macro-level, rich in culture and steeped in tradition, both China and the EU displayed similar agricultural-trade diplomatic styles and shared affinities for the protection of geographical indications. The divergent micro-level

styles of China and the EU in terms of high and low-context negotiation styles indicated that reconciling differences at the micro-level of diplomatic styles was instrumental in advancing the negotiations and wider process of building EU-China agricultural-trade relations. The consonance in EU and Chinese negotiation styles is partly cultural in nature, and while it may not be the most visible in the process of building relationships, the micro-level of diplomatic styles illuminates the subtleties occurring when differing negotiation styles encounter in diplomatic relationship-building.

This in-depth study of a classic diplomatic negotiation case not only illuminated the making of EU-China agricultural-trade relations as the process of developing a relationship of shared intentions, but also unveiled the inner-working of the process by which the EU and China bridged differences and built synergies in negotiating the landmark EU-China Agreement on GIs. The successful negotiation of the EU-China Agreement on geographical indications paves way for building a more confident and mature relationship between the EU and China, and has wider implications for the changing roles of the EU and China in the world.

Chapter 6 Making EU-China Climate Change Relations

6.1 Introduction

Generally recognised as a momentous step in international climate change diplomacy, China officially launched its national emission trading system (ETS) in December 2017. 'The world is changing with new, broad climate leadership', the EU stated, 'with both the EU and China committed to emissions trading, two major international players are championing carbon markets to meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement and curb emissions cost-effectively'.[1] Climate change has become a core pillar of the EU-China bilateral relationship, and the EU and China 'aspire to enhance their strategic cooperation on Emission Trading System as a key tool to combat climate change'.[2] This chapter explores the diplomatic relationship-building process in the flagship EU-China climate-related bilateral cooperation initiative – the EU-China Emission Trading System (ETS) Project. Guided by the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building, and applying the social network analysis-based methodology, the chapter proceeds as follows.

The next section explains the pivotal roles of the EU and China in global climate diplomacy, and the significance of their bilateral cooperation on emissions trading system for international climate change diplomacy. The third section unveils the structure of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building in the field of climate change. It reveals the multitude of institutional actors interwoven in EU-China climate cooperation, and deciphers the different roles of the institutional actors in pursuit of EU-China joint climate

[1] European Commission, EU welcomes launch of China's carbon market, 19 December 2017, available at https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news/eu-welcomes-launch-chinas-carbon-market_en

[2] Memorandum of Understanding to enhance Cooperation on Emissions Trading between the European Commission and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China

action. It further investigates the institutional mechanisms underpinning the multitudes of diplomatic interactions in EU-China cooperation on emissions trading system. The fourth section decodes the complex issues of climate change negotiated between the EU and China. It explains the political and technical discussions of EU-China ETS cooperation in light of the broader development of EU-China climate change relations and the evolving international climate change negotiations. The fifth section investigates the respective climate change diplomatic styles of the EU and China in shaping EU-China climate relations. A focus on European and Chinese climate change diplomatic strategies and negotiation styles provides insights into the more social and human layers of EU-China climate change relations. In so doing, this chapter unravels the mysteries surrounding the process of making EU-China climate change relations, a relationship made possible and constitutively influenced by the institutional structure, complex negotiations of technical and political substance, and the diplomatic styles of the EU and China in climate change; and a relationship shaped by the creation and recreation of EU-China shared intentions manifest in EU-China shared climate ambition.

6.2 Background

6.2.1 Climate diplomacy

EU-China climate change relations constitute one of the most critical relationships in multilateral climate diplomacy, and one of the most crucial areas of collaboration in the multifaceted EU-China relationship. In particular, the EU-China cooperation on emissions trading systems is the ‘flagship’ cooperation of EU-China climate relations, and developing emissions trading system is the nucleus of the respective decarbonisation

policies of China and the EU.[3]

The global objective of diplomatic efforts to address climate change is encapsulated in the Accord de Paris, more often known as the Paris Agreement, which is 'to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.'[4] The Paris Agreement 'builds upon the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and for the first time brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so'.[5] The EU and China are both parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and both have undertaken pivotal roles in international climate change diplomacy.

The EU's climate diplomacy objective is enshrined the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Article 191 of the TFEU states that the EU's environment policy shall contribute to the pursuit of the objectives of global climate mitigation, including 'promoting measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, and in particular combating climate change'. Article 191 also states that 'within their respective spheres of competence, the Union and the Member States shall cooperate with third countries and with the competent international organisations'. The EU has endeavoured to provide leadership in international climate

[3] Interview, Chinese and European climate negotiators.
[4] Paris agreement: essential elements, available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement
[5] Details of the Paris Agreement available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement

diplomacy since the UNFCCC was adopted in 1992. Keen to project its values and norms regarding sustainability and green growth beyond its borders, the EU has been at the forefront of pushing for stringent international commitments and a major driving force for emission reduction targets (Oberthür and Kelly, 2008; Xia, 2018).

According to a joint report by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, the EU-28 emitted 3.4 billion tonnes of CO_2 in 2016 (9.5% of the global total, 6.8 tonnes per capita, 0.2 tonnes per dollar of GDP) (Olivier, Schure and Peters, 2017). The EU has made a commitment to a binding target of reducing domestic greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. This was first legalised in the EU's 2030 climate and energy framework in 2014, and was later confirmed in the 'intended nationally determined reduction commitment of the Union and its Member States submitted to the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on 6 March 2015'.[6] As stated in the EU's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution of the EU and its Member States to the UNFCCC, in order to achieve this target, all sectors of the economy should 'contribute to achieving those emission reductions and the target is to be delivered in the most cost-effective manner through the European Union emission trading system ('EU ETS'), amounting to a reduction of 43 % below 2005 levels by 2030'.[7]

As the world's largest developing country and second largest economy, China is also the world's largest emitter of GHG emissions. Since the Copenhagen summit in 2009, China has stepped up its efforts to combat climate change. China made a national commitment

[6] Directive (EU) 2018/410 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 2018 amending Directive 2003/87/EC to enhance Official Journal of the European Union, 19.3.2018, L 76/3
[7] ibid.

that by 2020 China will 'lower carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by 40% to 45% from the 2005 level, increase the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to about 15% and increase the forested area by 40 million hectares and the forest stock volume by 1.3 billion cubic meters compared to the 2005 levels'.[8] In line with the 2009 China's climate commitment, China set out its nationally determined contributions to tackle climate change with higher ambition and resolve that was enshrined in China's intended nationally determined contribution (NDC) submission to the UNFCCC, in which China pledged that by 2030, China aims to 'achieve the peaking of carbon dioxide emissions around 2030 and making best efforts to peak early; To lower carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by 60% to 65% from the 2005 level'.[9]

In China's intended nationally determined contribution submission to the UNFCCC in 2015, China emphasised that 'climate change is a global issue that requires the collaboration of the international community' and in accordance with 'the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities', the Parties to the UNFCCC should work to enhance cooperation.[10] In 2016 China emitted 10.5 billion tonnes of CO_2 (29.3% of the global total 7.4 tonnes per capita, 0.5 tonnes per dollar of GDP) (Olivier, Schure and Peters, 2017). China encounters a major challenge to 'coordinate economic development and environmental protection and climate change mitigation' (Liu, 2016). Reconciling economic development and environmental protection has been China's main reform agenda ethos.[11] China sees its efforts in coordinating both

[8] China's NDC submission to the UNFCCC《强化应对气候变化行动——中国国家自主贡献》, p.3
[9] ibid. p.5
[10] China's NDC submission to the UNFCCC《强化应对气候变化行动——中国国家自主贡献》 available at: https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/China%20First/China%27s%20First%20NDC%20Submission.pdf
[11] Interview, Beijing, 22 July 2016

domestic and international dimensions of climate mitigation as a pathway to the country's transition towards a low-carbon economy, and to affirm its aspiring responsible great power role in international affairs.[12]

6.2.2 Decarbonisation action

The EU-China bilateral cooperation on climate change is particularly germane to the respective internal decarbonisation strategies of the EU and China, and global efforts to mitigate climate change. The EU and China institutionalised their cooperation in the area of climate change with the establishment of the EU-China Partnership on Climate Change in 2005. The partnership provides 'a high-level political framework' that sets out concrete climate actions and includes 'a regular review of progress' in the context of the annual EU-China Summit. Both sides are committed to 'tackl[ing] the serious challenges of climate change through practical and results-driven cooperation'.[13] In the increasingly complex nature of EU-China climate relations, the cooperation between the EU and China on emissions trading has become the cornerstone of their relationship. In particular, the cooperation between the EU and China to build capacity for China's emissions trading system epitomises the strong commitments from both sides to jointly tackle climate change and transition their economies to low-carbon economies. The EU and China both value market-based instruments for environmental protection, and 'consider Emissions Trading System to be a cost-effective policy tool with a significant potential to contribute to a low-carbon economy and the necessary innovation and deployment of low carbon technologies'.[14] Putting a price on carbon and establishing emissions trading system have been the EU and China's core strategy to achieve their climate change mitigation targets,

[12] Interview, Beijing, 5 July 2017
[13] Joint Statement of the 8th EU-China Summit. Brussels, 5 September 2005, IP/05/1091
[14] Memorandum of Understanding to enhance Cooperation on Emissions Trading between the European Commission and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China

and are essential to the EU and China's transitioning to low-carbon economies.

Emissions trading system (or sometimes referred to as a cap-and-trade system) and carbon tax are two main market-based instruments of climate mitigation policy. Putting a price on carbon, in the form of carbon tax or emissions trading has become a central pillar of global climate governance. Emissions trading is a valuable policy instrument that utilises the market mechanism to regulate environmental pollution, and is particularly germane to meeting greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets from large emitters through a market-based approach (Delbeke and Vis, 2015; OECD, 2009). The basis of an ETS is formed by 'a limited number of permits, initially allocated to polluters by the authorities', the permits are tradeable, 'polluters that emit below the quantity allocated to them may sell part of their allowance to other polluters who have more difficulties in reaching their permitted levels, or to newcomers in the market' (Knill and Liefferink, 2007, p.11).

The Kyoto Protocol was decisive for the establishment of the EU's ETS which is the world's first carbon market.[15] Emissions trading, as set out in Article 17 of the Kyoto Protocol, allows countries that have 'emission units to spare - emissions permitted them but not 'used' - to sell this excess capacity to countries that are over their targets'. In so doing, a 'new commodity was created in the form of emission reductions or removals. Carbon can be tracked and traded like any other commodity, known as the 'carbon market''.[16] The use of robust carbon pricing to promote the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions while fostering sustainable development was further enshrined in Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. According to Article 6, carbon pricing can serve to support the

[15] Interview, Brussels, 8 June 2016

[16] UNFCCC, Emissions Trading: Greenhouse gas emissions a new commodity, available at: https://unfccc.int/process/the-kyoto-protocol/mechanisms/emissions-trading

implementation of the Paris Agreement, and in particular the role of the ETS can support nationally determined contributions (NDC) implementation in the regions concerned. Putting a price on carbon as 'a means of bringing down emissions and drive investment into cleaner options' can 'stimulates clean technology and market innovation, fuelling new, low-carbon drivers of economic growth'.[17]

The EU emissions trading system (EU ETS) is a cornerstone of the EU's policy to combat climate change and its key policy tool for reducing greenhouse gas emissions cost-effectively. As the world's first major carbon market, the EU ETS has been in operation for over a decade and remains the biggest carbon market in the world. The ETS covers around 45% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions, and operates in the 28 EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.[18] Now operating in its 4th trading period (2021-2030), the EU ETS has developed through the years: the 1st trading period (2005-2007) saw the EU successfully establish the world's biggest carbon market. In the 2nd trading period (2008-2012), Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein joined and aviation was brought into the system. The 3rd trading period (2013-2020) saw major reform take place with 'the introduction of an EU-wide cap on emissions (reduced by 1.74% each year) and a progressive shift towards auctioning of allowances in place of cost-free allocation'.[19]

As China is the biggest source of CO_2 emissions globally, establishing a national ETS is top on the agenda of Chinese climate policy. In 2009 the State Council endorsed emissions trading as a national strategy and subsequently approved a policy to implement a national

[17] World Bank, 'What is carbon pricing?', available at: http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/pricing-carbon
[18] European Commission, The EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) Factsheet, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/factsheet_ets_en.pdf
[19] ibid.

emissions trading system through the establishment of ETS pilot projects to 'test the water'.[20] To reach China's 2030 emissions reduction targets set out in its NDC to the UNFCCC, the promotion of emissions trading market was specifically mentioned in the statement, and that building on carbon emission trading pilots, China is 'steadily implement[ing] a nationwide carbon emission trading system and gradually establish[ing] the carbon emission trading mechanism so as to make the market play the decisive role in resource allocation; and to develop mechanisms for the reporting, verifying and certificating of carbon emissions and to improve rules and regulations for carbon emission trading to ensure openness, fairness and justice in the operation of the carbon emission trading market'.[21]

With seven emissions trading pilots established across seven cities – Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing, Guangdong, Hubei and Shenzhen, China launched its national emissions trading system in 2017. The development of China's ETS has greatly benefited from the EU's experience in this area. China is now closely collaborating with the EU to further improve the nationwide emissions trading system. The EU has now been working with all 32 Chinese provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions to support the development of China's national ETS. Moreover, China's 13th Five-Year Plan specifically mentioned the ETS and that the period of the five-year-plan which spans 2015-2020 is crucial time frame for developing the national ETS in China.

The cooperation project between the EU and China to build capacity for China's ETS, also known as the 'Supporting the Design and Implementation of Emissions Trading Systems

[20] Interview, Brussels, 22 March 2018.
[21]《强化应对气候变化行动——中国国家自主贡献》p.14

in China' (EU-China ETS Project) officially started in January 2014 and was completed in January 2017. The project was considered such a success that the EU and China agreed on a larger-scale, follow-up project on EU-China ETS cooperation, and a Memorandum of Understanding institutionalised a political dialogue dedicated to emissions trading systems. The following will provide an in-depth analysis of the process of EU-China climate change relationship-building through the case of EU-China ETS cooperation.

6.3 Structure

6.3.1 Institutional actors

Per the diplomatic relationship-building theory elaborated in chapter three, unveiling the structure of diplomatic relationship-building is the prerequisite to deciphering the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. The following section analyses the structural configuration of institutional actors in EU-China climate change relations, which entails unveiling the institutional actors and the institutional mechanisms by which they interact in EU-China climate change diplomacy. The EU-China climate change institutional structure exhibits a network character consisting of a 'centrality' of the most consequential institutional actors in the EU-China climate change relationship, and a 'periphery' populated by a constellation of institutional actors providing consultation and advice. The institutional actors are linked by 'strong and weak' ties built through a multitude of institutional mechanisms. The network resembles two concentric circles with a centrality at its core circle and a periphery being its outer circle, visualised below:

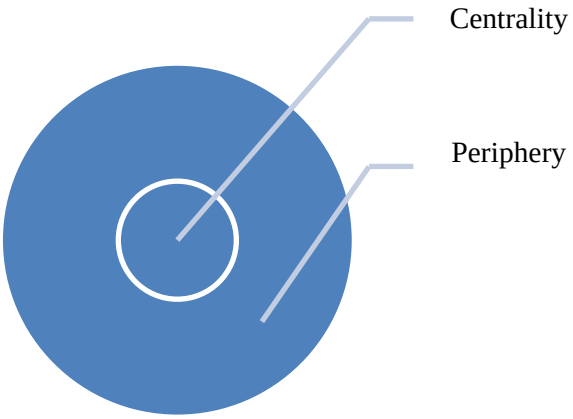


Figure 9 EU-China climate change network

The Centrality

The central institutional actors in EU-China climate change relations, and in the EU-China ETS cooperation in particular are the major Chinese government agencies and the EU-level institutions. On the Chinese side, among the diverse array of institutional actors influencing China's climate diplomacy, the central actors are the ministerial-level institutions. The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), especially its Climate Change Department, is the engine of China's climate policy. As the foremost decision-making institution in China responsible for developing all policies and regulations, the NDRC oversees the formulation of China's policies on tackling climate change. It develops China's climate strategy and leads China's efforts to develop a national carbon market which was launched in 2017. The NDRC oversees emissions reduction policies and leads the Chinese delegation to the UN Conference of Parties (COPs).[22]

China's newly created Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) is now the leading institution in China's cooperation with the EU on climate change issues. Since the

[22] Interview, Bonn, 8 November 2017

institutional restructuring of the State Council in 2018, the MEE has been the nucleus of China's climate policy-making. The MEE absorbed 'environmental duties formerly held by the land, water and agriculture ministries', climate change policies and low-carbon development, which were previously the responsibility of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) has been transferred to the new ministry (Reuters, 2018).

The Ministry of Finance (MOF) is responsible for administering environment and climate change related financial issues. It is responsible for approval of financial support and funding for climate change projects. In climate-related policy issues, the involvement and contribution of MOF lies in assuring that China's financial sector supports green projects. The National Energy Administration (NEA) is another important institution in the EU-China ETS cooperation, due to the intersection of climate protection policy and energy policy.[23] As an independent agency working under the administration of the National Development and Reform Commission, it formulates and implements China's national energy policy and regulates the energy sector including coal, oil, gas, and nuclear power, and is active participant in developing China's climate policy.

The key institutional actors in formulating EU climate change policy are the institutions of the European Union. The most important actor is the European Commission's directorates in charge of formulating and implementing climate-related policies. In particular, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA) is the key actor in the EU's efforts to tackling climate change at EU and international level, with the ultimate aim of building a global carbon trading market.[24] DG CLIMA develops and implements the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), and is the leading institutional

[23] Interview, Beijing, 3 December 2018
[24] Interview, Brussels, 24 April 2017

actor in fostering the EU's cooperation with China in developing China's carbon trading system.[25] DG CLIMA was established in 2010, as after the Copenhagen Climate Conference the EU realised the necessity for a separate directorate to 'navigate climate change' and to oversee the EU internal climate legislation and international climate change negotiations. Since its establishment, it has significantly enhanced the competence of the EU in international climate governance, providing a single voice for the EU to negotiate on behalf of its member states and strengthening its bargaining power vis-à-vis other important global actors such as China in international climate politics.[26]

There are other directorates of the European Commission also actively involved in the EU-China ETS cooperation. Within its remit of developing the EU's energy policy to be secure, sustainable, and competitive for Europe, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy (DG ENER) is the second most prominent institutional actor in the EU ETS development and EU-China ETS cooperation. Due to the cross-sectoral nature of climate change policy, DG ENER closely coordinates with DG CLIMA in implementing the EU's policy in supporting China's development of its emissions trading system and other EU-China energy-related cooperation and joint projects.

[25] Interview, 24 May 2016, Brussels
[26] Interview, 7 December 2017, Brussels

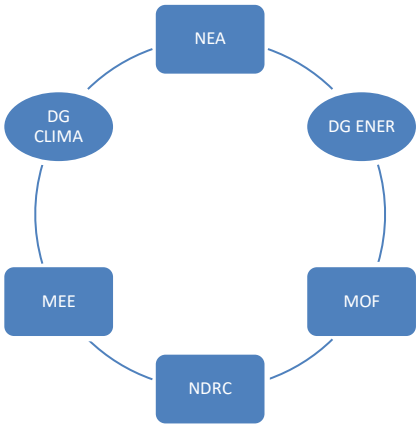


Figure 10 Central institutional actors in EU-China climate change relations

The centrality of institutional actors around the negotiation table of EU-China climate change relations are the two directorate-generals of DG CLIMA and DG ENER of the European Commission on the EU side, and four major Chinese ministries with competence for climate change policy – the MEE, the NDRC, the NEA and the MOF.

The Periphery

Aside from the central actors, EU-China climate diplomacy is shaped by a constellation of institutional actors populating a 'periphery' of the EU-China institutional network. These institutional actors span four main categories. The first category is governmental institutions, the second category consists of business-related institutions, followed by the third category of various research-related institutions and the fourth category of civil society representatives.

On the Chinese side, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is particularly active in the international climate change negotiations under the UNFCCC. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) with the NDRC lead China's climate change negotiation team in the

UNFCCC negotiations.[27] MOFA promotes and ensures China's national interests in the climate talks in international fora. Another major government agency involved in EU-China climate cooperation is the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) who administers China's national R&D initiatives that fund research relevant to climate mitigation and adaptation.

The State Council is the nucleus of China's administration. The State Council set up a National Leading Group for Addressing Climate Change in 2007 (Qi and Wu, 2013). It 'coordinates among various ministries in dealing with issues of climate change', as climate change issues have become a part of China's national strategy on sustainable development (Qi, Ma and Zhang, 2007, p.9). Other ministerial-level institutions contributing to EU-China ETS cooperation include the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China (MoHURD). The MoHURD was established in 2008 as a ministry under the State Council responsible for the administration of construction projects in China, it influences policies regarding low-carbon building development and construction projects.

Academic and research institutions play a crucial advisory role in China's climate change decision making, they provide scientific information to inform policy making. This indicates the increasingly important role of environmental research agencies and their support for technological development in China's economic development and international climate diplomacy. Leading institutions include the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) who provides technology and research advice for the establishment of China's emissions trading system. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) produces analysis on the

[27] Interview, Bonn, 10 November 2017

EU's climate policy and the European emissions trading system, and coordinates the annual EU-China ambassadors' forum, where climate change has gained an increasingly important place on the agenda.[28] Other important think tanks are the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) and the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR). The increasing role of research institutions attests to the importance of scientific research and technology in China's climate change policy.

The National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation (NCSC) (国家应对气候变化战略研究和国际合作中心) is the research center of China's NDRC. The Center engages in China's climate policy-making by providing analysis and coordinating policy-oriented events on climate change. Amongst the academic institutions in China, Tsinghua University is especially active in providing scientific support to China's low-carbon development through its research and technology, and is the main university represented in China's UNFCCC negotiation team.[29]

Several state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are influential in the climate field (Gallagher and Xuan, 2018, p.56). These SOEs include China's largest oil and gas producers – PetroChina Company Limited (PetroChina), Sinopec and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), who play a dominant role in the oil and gas industry in China (The Wall Street Journal, 2015). Also involved in the emissions trading system are China's five major power generators, also known as the Big Five – Huaneng, Datang, Guodian, Huadian and State Power Investment Corporation. The current nationwide emissions trading system in China covers only the power sector. The five major power generators participate in ad-hoc

[28] Interview, Beijing, 17 December 2017
[29] Interview, Bonn, 8 November 2017

events on emissions trading to be kept informed of the development of the ETS (Zhang, Guo and Chen, 2011). China's two major grid companies – State Grid Corporation China and China Southern Power Grid – are also kept informed of the development of the EU-China emissions trading systems cooperation.

Local authorities have an increasingly important role in China's climate policy and the development of China's emission trading system. The most pertinent local government agencies are in the seven cities who have established their own emission reduction strategies with their respective pilot ETS projects – Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing, Guangdong, Hubei and Shenzhen (Liu, Chen, Zhao and Zhao, 2015). The seven pilot projects' local Development Research Center (DRC)s are especially active in the technical cooperation of 'train the trainers' programme of EU-China ETS cooperation.[30]

On the EU side, there is a relatively tight constellation of institutional actors. The EU's decisions on the adoption of European legislative measures, such as directives and regulations on environmental policy are essentially made by the Council of Ministers (Knill and Liefferink, 2007). Members of the Council are the respective EU national ministers for different areas of expertise, which ensure that the member states' interests are represented at the European level. The Council of the EU is a single legal entity, but it meets in 10 different 'configurations', depending on the subject being discussed. The Environment Council configuration is responsible for EU environment policy and climate change-related matters. Due to the cross-sectoral nature of climate policy, other relevant Council configurations such as the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council configuration may hold joint sessions with the Environment Council to discuss climate

[30] Interview, 1 July 2017, Beijing

issues. [31] Council summits are prepared by the Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member States to the European Union (COREPER). As enshrined in article 240(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, COREPER is the Council's main preparatory body. All items to be included into the Council's agenda (except for some agricultural matters) must first be examined by COREPER, unless the Council decides otherwise.

The European External Action Service (EEAS) has an increasingly important role in the EU's external climate policy, since the Lisbon Treaty entered into force in 2009. As the EU's diplomatic service, the EEAS plays an essential role in enhancing the EU's commitment to stepping up its climate diplomacy. The European Union is represented in China by the Delegation in Beijing. Established in 1988, the Delegation works closely with the diplomatic missions of the EU Member States and keeps abreast the European External Action Service, the Commission and other EU institutions on developments in China. The Delegation serves as the main coordinator in liaising European and Chinese authorities and activities, facilitating the development of the bilateral EU-China ETS cooperation.

Due to the cross-sector nature of climate change issues, various directorates of the European Commission are involved in EU-China climate change relationship-building. Amongst them is the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment (DG ENVI) who manages EU-China environmental cooperation. The European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) is responsible for EU policy on research, science and innovation. The EU has substantially increased its research and

[31] Interview, 20 April 2017, Brussels

development on environment, energy and climate issues. DG RTD helps to support clean technologies research as well as to further strengthen knowledge of climate change and its impacts. Closely working with DG RTD is the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC). The JRC is the EU's science and knowledge service, providing scientific research and advice in support of EU policies. The JRC supports EU efforts in international climate negotiations and is involved in the EU-China ETS cooperation, such as in the work of technology transfer between the EU and China.

The European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) is responsible for formulating the EU's development policy and external aid. DG DEVCO provided financial support for the EU's capacity-building project on emissions trading with China.[32] The Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) operates an industrial policy dialogue with China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) on polices pertaining to the environment and industrial cooperation. For the EU, industrial competitiveness is a key aspect of EU climate and energy policies and the transition to a low-carbon economy is important in order to transform the European industrial sectors (European Commission, 2014). The EU-China industrial policy dialogue facilitates mutual understanding of environment and climate change issues from the industry perspective and helps to transform industry in response to climate change-related challenges.[33]

The European Parliament's role in the EU's external climate change policy is defined in Article 218 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The European Parliament (EP) has the right to be consulted by the Council and has to offer its formal

[32] Interview, 15 May 2018, Brussels
[33] Interview, 23 May 2018, Brussels

approval of the final international agreements that the EU negotiates with third parties for the agreement to be officially ratified. The European Parliament shapes the climate agenda through its 'internal powers as co-legislator, which have enabled it to amend polices brought forward by the Commission to give effect to the EU's wider external climate ambitions' (Burns, 2016). More specifically, the European Parliament shapes EU climate policy through its debates and non-legislative resolutions, and adopts laws jointly with the EU Council of Ministers in the field of climate change (Wurzel and Connelly, 2011). The Parliament plays an important role in EU-China climate change relations and cooperation on the ETS. The Parliament has a crucial role in amending the policy proposals related to the revisions of the EU's ETS that has been put forward by the Commission over the years. In so doing, the Parliament is consistently shaping the EU's climate-related policy. Furthermore, MEPs' visit to China and vice versa advance the progress and political momentum in bilateral EU-China climate change negotiations and cooperation projects.[34] The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is another EU actor active in EU climate policy. The EESC participates in the annual UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties and organises climate-oriented civil society meetings and multi-stakeholder, multi-level climate governance collaboration.[35]

The European Union Chamber of Commerce in China represents European business in China and has a working group dedicated to carbon markets. This attests to the importance European business community attaches to climate issues in China, and the importance of emissions mitigation in China's development. The carbon market working group holds regular meetings that bring together relevant development agencies and climate-related

[34] Interview, London, 11 April 2016
[35] Interview, 29 Jun 2015, Brussels

institutions to discuss climate change and carbon-market issues.[36] Industrial and civil society stakeholders play an important role in the consultation process, with the increasing involvement of non-state and subnational climate actors in global climate action plans. The major European-level associations involved in the EU ETS are EURELECTRIC which represents the European power sector, EUROFER (the European Steel Association), CEMBUREAU (the European Cement Association) and Cefic (the European Chemical Industry Council).

6.3.2 Institutional mechanisms

The institutional actors are connected through multiple institutional mechanisms, enabling the EU and China to build their climate change relationship. The various stakeholders include the government institutions, the business sector, industry groups and environmental civil society representatives in the EU-China climate change institutional structure. The institutional actors have been exerting growing influence over EU-China climate change policy development through a growing number of channels. As explained in chapter five, the overall EU-China relationship building process is supported by a three-pillar structure of the EU-China Strategic Partnership on politics, trade and people-to-people dialogue.[37] The bilateral interactions on climate change fall primarily under Pillar II the High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue. The mechanisms of EU-China collaboration on climate change has become increasingly multi-layered and institutionalised, consisting of a complex web of bilateral exchanges. The ties of cooperation include, *inter alia*, high-level political dialogues, technical working group exchanges and ad-hoc events such as scientific conferences. The highest echelons of EU-China climate change mechanisms are mainly the EU-China summits and the specific

[36] Interview, 23 July 2016, Beijing,
[37] See Annexe for the EU-China Dialogue Architecture

bilateral mechanism dedicated to climate change, the BCM.[38]

The EU-China Summit is the highest level of bilateral dialogue between the EU and China. Climate change and interrelated areas of energy and technology have risen to the top of the political agenda of recent EU-China summits (Holzer and Zhang, 2008). Climate change has featured increasingly prominently in the joint statements in EU-China summits. For example, the 8th EU-China Summit in 2005 was a major milestone in the EU-China cooperation on climate change during which both sides issued a *Joint Declaration on Climate Change between China and the EU*, which confirmed the establishment of the EU-China partnership on climate change. The Summit signaled that the two sides were 'determined to tackle the serious challenges of climate change through practical and results-oriented cooperation. This partnership will fully complement the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. It will strengthen cooperation and dialogue on climate change including clean energy, and will promote sustainable development. It will include cooperation on the development, deployment and transfer of low carbon technology, including advanced near-zero-emissions coal technology through carbon capture and storage'.[39]

The EU-China Business Summit is an important mechanism for the discussions on climate change-related trade issues, the Business Summit gathers diplomatic and government representatives and representatives from a wide arrange of business sectors. For example, under the theme 'strengthening the pillars of global trade and investment', the 12th EU-China Business Summit served as an important platform for discussions on topical issues including climate change and sustainability. The Business Summit has increasingly

[38] Interview, 9 June 2016, Brussels
[39] Joint Statement of the 8th EU-China Summit

incorporated environmental issues and climate protection into the agenda, and climate-related issues now normally feature in the post-summit *Joint Business Declaration,* such as the paragraph in the Joint Declaration of the 12th EU-China Business Summit - Strengthening the pillars of global trade and investment: 'Both China and the EU are committed to implement the Paris Agreement and fight climate change. Participants recognised the need for European and Chinese companies to share best practices and work together in developing new technologies and solutions that promote sustainability'.[40] Below the summits, the annual High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue features prominently in the EU-China dialogue architecture, together with the ministerial level annual EU-China Joint Committee, climate change issues are debated and negotiated during these high-level meetings which contribute to advancing the bilateral EU-China agenda concerning climate change, and strengthening political momentum.[41]

Complementing the abovementioned high-level meetings are four sectoral mechanisms that contribute to EU-China climate change relations. The Climate Change Partnership and Bilateral consultation mechanism (BCM) on Climate Change is the mechanism dedicated especially to advancing EU-China cooperation on climate change. China and the EU agreed in 2005 on a partnership on climate change to strengthen cooperation and dialogue. The BCM is the platform on which this dialogue is held. Meetings usually take place every year at a technical level; and are of a strategic nature, touching upon many issues including the UNFCCC negotiations.[42]

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[40] 12th EU-China Business Summit Strengthening the Pillars of Global Trade and Investment, Joint Business Declaration, Brussels, 2 June 2017, available at: http://www.eu-china-business-summit.eu/content/uploads/2017/06/CH-BS-020617-Joint-Business-Declaration-final-V2.pdf

[41] Interview, Brussels, 22 March 2018

[42] Interview, Bonn, 6 November 2017

The Policy Steering Committee of the EU-China ETS cooperation (The PSC) is the only mechanism dedicated specifically to EU-China emissions trading cooperation project. The PSCs serve as a 'review or stock-taking' meeting to evaluate how the EU can 'achieve its impact' and support China in developing its carbon market.[43] The PSC meetings also initiate discussions on the orientation that concrete cooperation actions could take. The first PSC took place in May 2014. The second PSC took place in February 2015 serving as a mid-term review of the project and the third PSC took place in March 2016 for policy revision during which both sides started talks about strengthening EU-China climate cooperation through a second EU-China emissions trading project.[44]

The EU-China Environment Policy Dialogue (EPD) has been ongoing at ministerial level since 2003. Like most EU-China formal exchanges, the EPD meeting alternates between Brussels and Beijing. On the EU side, it is the European Commission's DG Environment that leads the Dialogue with the Chinese delegation headed by the Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection. It is an 'important political opportunity' for both sides to share experiences, address issues that could improve environmental policies. The EPD is essentially a forum for China to develop environmental policies, and for the EU to improve its environmental policies.[45]

The EU-China Dialogue on Energy was set up by DG Energy and Transport of the European Commission and the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission. The dialogue aims to benefit the development of cooperation between the EU and China

[43] Interview, Brussels, 1 December 2016
[44] Interview, Brussels, 28 March 2018
[45] Interview, Brussels, 8 June 2018

on energy and transport matters.[46] The Dialogue on Energy attests to the EU and China's commitments to strengthening EU-China cooperation in the energy sector and relevant climate change policy areas.

The EU-China Urbanisation Partnership was launched in May 2012, and aim to offer a framework for concerted climate actions between European and Chinese cities. In this framework, both sides hold an annual EU-China Urbanisation Forum envisaged to play a steering role for the Urbanisation Partnership. The annual EU-China Urbanisation Forum convenes stakeholders to exchange information on major changes and achievements in sustainable urban development. DG Energy and China's NDRC are the main coordinators of the annual forum. Low carbon development has been one of the major cooperation projects under the umbrella of the Urbanisation Partnership. The Steering Committee Meeting of China-EU Science and Technology (STI) has become an important and indispensable element of the EU-China relations. To further advance cooperation in science, technology and innovation, the STI is co-chaired by the Ministry of Science and Technology of China (MoST) and DG Research and Innovation of the European Commission (DG RTD).

The UNFCCC meetings provide important additional avenues for the EU and China to discuss climate-related issues, of which emission trading cooperation is an important topic on the agenda.[47] Within the UN framework, China has become a strong player in the collation of developing countries, and together with the EU have become two of the most active members around the negotiation table of the UNFCCC-led climate change negotiations. The EU and China's role in influencing the agenda and process of UN

[46] Memorandum of Understanding, EU-China Dialogue on Energy and Transport Strategies
[47] Interview, Katowice, 5 December 2018; Interview, Katowice, 10 December 2018

negotiations has come to the fore with the US administration's intention to leave the Paris Agreement. The UNFCCC COP meetings provide impetus for the ongoing talks on climate change between the EU and China.[48] This was especially potent at COP 23 where officials and experts from both the EU and China gathered for discussions on carbon market cooperation ahead of the finalisation of the EU-China ETS project and the launch of China's nationwide emissions trading system. Moreover, the Petersburg Climate Dialogue is another important mechanism for strengthening EU-China climate cooperation. It is an annual informal ministerial consultation co-hosted by the German government and the chair of the annual UN-sponsored climate negotiations.

Climate policies and emissions trading are being debated beyond the UN fora, and in major international meetings such as the G20 and G7, and other regional and inter-regional diplomatic gatherings, including inter alia, the Asia-Europe meeting. This is because climate change is related to all sectors of the economy, and these institutionalised global regimes provide opportunities to discuss climate-friendly economic models and practices.[49] The multilateral settings provide convenient channels - time and space - for EU-China exchanges on climate change.[50] The proliferation of international discussions on climate change enables EU and Chinese negotiators' timely exchanges at various political levels and on diverse issue areas touching upon climate change. The international meetings allow China and the EU to exchange climate-related knowledge and also bring Chinese and European enterprises and experts together contributing to the EU-China climate cooperation.

[48] Interview, 6 April 2017, Brussels
[49] Interview, EU and Chinese climate negotiators.
[50] Interview, 7 December 2016, Brussels

6.3.3 Structural coordination and EU-China shared intentions in EU-China climate change diplomacy

The above section has disentangled a nuanced picture of the structural dynamics of EU-China climate change diplomacy that is characterised by a multiplicity of institutional actors linked through a multitude of institutional mechanisms. The diverse institutional actors and ties in EU-China climate change relations are embedded in a network-like institutional structure. This network structure generates both constraints and opportunities for strengthening cooperation in the process of EU-China climate change relationship-building, and underscores the necessity for enhanced structural coordination in building EU-China climate change relations. Structural coordination is particularly important for the strengthening of EU-China shared intentions, manifest as shared climate ambition in EU-China climate change relations, because 'cooperative solutions cannot be arrived at without a substantial amount of we-mode action towards shared collective goals' (Tuomela, 2002). In the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building detailed in chapter three, it is suggested that a well-coordinated, balanced structure facilitates the exchange of knowledge and expertise in the process of diplomatic relationship-building and the development of EU-China shared intentions. Whereas an unbalanced coordinated institutional structure impedes the development of EU-China shared intentions and EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

Institutional actors in the process of EU-China climate change relationship-building

A closer investigation of the institutional structure reveals the loci of relationship-building in EU-China climate change cooperation, which consists of a 'centrality', a centralised and relatively stable decision making power in EU-China climate change relations, with a growing number of peripheral actors providing consultation and advice to the centrality in the process. The complex constellation of institutional actors encompasses not just

traditional diplomatic institutions but also a wide range of institutions with distinct responsibilities in EU-China climate change cooperation. The complexity of institutional actors in the EU-China climate change network generates coordination challenges, as 'there are so many institutions involved in the process, the challenge lies in sharing knowledge and experience across the different layers of collaboration'.[51]

The diversity of the institutional actors and their influence in the process of EU-China climate change relationship-building can be further understood by differentiating the genres of the institutional actors in China and the EU. Governmental institutions with the negotiation mandates and climate-related decision-making competence are the most important actors in the process. While civil society is less represented on the Chinese side, the EU-level institutions have frequent consultation with NGOs in the climate policy-making process. Research institutions have an increasingly enhanced role in climate change policies in both the EU and China, the scientific community is especially active in issue areas characterised by technical complexity as is the case of climate change negotiations. Business and industry actors provide advice to the central institutions as a way of ensuring policy formulation takes into account of business concerns.[52] Through the prism of 'centrality' in social network analysis, the institutional actors' roles are clustered in the following table:

[51] Interview, 19 August 2016, Beijing
[52] Interview, 7 August 2018

	Centrality: decision-making		Periphery: advisory/consultation	
	Chinese Institutions	**EU Institutions**	**Chinese Institutions**	**EU Institutions**
Governmental Institutional Actors	• NDRC • MEE • NEA • MOF	• DG CLIMA • DG ENER	• MoST • State Council • MOFA • Chinese Mission to the EU • MoHURD • MIIT • National Energy Commission • Local DRCs	• DG ENVI • DG RTD • DG DEVCO • European Parliament • Council of the EU • EEAS • EU Delegation to China • DG GROW
Business-related Institutional Actors	• N/A	• N/A	• SINOPEC • Sinocarbon • State grid corporation China • China Southern Power Grid • PetroChina • CNOOC • Huaneng • Datang • Guodian • Huadian • State Power Investment Corporation	• European Union Chamber of Commerce in China • EURELECTRIC • EUROFER • CEMBUREAU • Cefic
Research-related Institutional Actors	• N/A	• N/A	• CAS • NCSC • CICIR • CIIS • CASS • Tsinghua University	• Research institutions in Europe
Civil society-related Institutional Actors	• N/A	• N/A	• NGOs	• NGOs

Figure 11 Institutional actors in EU-China climate change relations

The institutional actors in the 'centrality' of the EU-China climate change network makes decisions and is the nucleus of EU-China climate change relationship-building. These

institutions decide who has a seat at the negotiation table and thus has important implications for the overall EU-China climate change coordination and cooperation. Institutional actors in the 'periphery' provide consultations and advice to support the 'centrality'. The periphery in EU-China climate change network has enlarged over the years whereas a strengthened centrality can be observed albeit the institutional reforms in China and the EU. Climate change diplomacy relies on climate change science, scientific research-related actors form 'epistemic communities can create shared understandings among policy elites about the nature of the problem' (Haas, 1992). Knowledge diplomacy and the use of scientific information are important elements of climate negotiations, and inflow of scientific knowledge and information into the climate talks has represented a prerequisite for effective negotiation (Sjöstedt, 2009). In this light, the technical consultation process is increasingly vital in supporting EU-China climate change relations. China's NDRC works closely with industry and businesses through workshops and seek advice from industry and research communities.[53] Climate negotiators from both the EU and China reflected that when the institutional actors in the 'centrality' and the 'periphery' act proactively and achieve high-levels of coordination within and between the 'centrality' and the 'periphery', a strong and balanced coordination can be achieved which was vital to the EU-China ETS project.[54]

The highly institutionalised and increasingly multi-actor EU-China climate change network structure is determined by the climate policy decision-making processes in both China and the EU. China's policy-making with regard to tackling climate change is underpinned by an increasingly institutionalised structure. Anchored in the centrality of a national administration, climate change policy-making depends on the cooperation of

[53] Interview, 25 July 2016, Beijing
[54] Interview with EU and Chinese climate negotiators

government actors and various interest groups. The growing number of actors influencing China's climate change policy are the scientific community including experts, academic institutions and think tanks, who are gaining influence in climate change policy-making. This indicates that climate policy has moved from the outskirts to the core of government activity, reflecting China's role as a developing country in global climate governance and its aspiring responsible power ambition in international affairs.[55]

The EU is a unique supranational entity and climate change policy is a shared competence between the EU institutions and its member states, as 'a system of governance' decision-making authority in the EU is relatively disperse (Kornprobst 2015). Climate issues are of high-profile nature for the EU and the EU's climate-related policy is underpinned by the structure that reflects the 'trilogue' negotiation process between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission in the EU's decision-making.[56] Decision-making complexity and a high level of institutionalisation are characteristic for EU policymaking. The EU's *sui generis* system of governance is characterised as a 'multi-level policymaking system', and is potent in the development of a hybrid system of diplomacy within the EU (Smith, 2015). This unique nature of the EU has important implications for its external relations in environmental and climate issues, as the EU's external climate competence is affected by the internal division of powers between the EU and its member states in environmental matters (Kuloveso and Cremona, 2014). The complex institutional coordination among China and the EU's climate-related institutions form a large network of EU-China climate change relations that requires a balanced structural coordination within and between the 'centrality' and 'periphery' of the network to facilitate EU-China climate change relationship-building.

[55] Interview, Beijing, 3 December 2018
[56] Interview, 21 April 2017, Brussels

Institutional ties in the process of EU-China climate change relationship-building

The institutional actors engage through a multitude of mechanisms creating 'strong and weak ties' that shape EU-China climate change diplomacy. There is a diversified level of institutionalisation in EU-China climate change relations. The characteristics of these mechanisms imply to a certain extent the quality of the relationship between the institutional actors in the process of EU-China climate change relations. Social network analysis conceptual tools of 'strong and weak ties' would be particularly illuminating in this regard. For the purpose of this research, the strongest ties refer to the ties having the strongest impact in the process of diplomatic relationship-building; the weakest ties are the ties having the weakest impact in the process of diplomatic relationship-building. As explained in chapter four, two metrics can be used to assess whether diplomatic encounters form 'strong or weak ties' in the process of relationship-building. The first metrics measures the level of formality of the institutional mechanisms. This is because formal and informal channels of diplomatic interactions 'between governmental and other actors' shape state behavior (Rodhes, 2008, p. 246). Both formal and informal diplomatic channels support EU-China exchanges on capacity building, technology cooperation and exchange of best practices in climate change. The second metrics measures the frequency of the talks. The degree of frequency is important in that the more frequent both sides communicate with each other, the more frequent issues and problems can be clarified and resolved, which may facilitate building 'mutual familiarity and trust, that are central to reaching consensus and agreement'.[57] In relation to the two metrics, the multitude of EU-China climate change institutional mechanisms can be categorised as follows:

[57] Interview, EU and Chinese negotiation teams, 2016-2018.

Mechanism	Characteristics	
	Formality/Informality	Frequency
Annual EU-China Summit	Formal	1 per year
EU-China Business Summit	Formality mix informality	1 per year
The EU-China High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue	Formal	1 per year
EU-China Economic and Trade Joint Committee	Formal	1 per year
EU-China Environnement Policy Dialogue	Formality mix informality	1 per year
Climate Change Partnership and BCM on Climate Change	Formality mix informality	1 per year
EU-China Energy Dialogue	Formality mix informality	1 per year
EU-China ETS Policy Steering Committee	Formality mix informality	3 times
EU-China Urbanisation Partnership	Formality mix informality	1 per year
Science and Technology Steering Committee	Formality mix informality	1 per year
UNFCCC/G20/G7 margin talks	Formal	Regular

Figure 12 Institutional mechanisms in EU-China climate change relations

The institutional mechanisms provide avenues for information and resources exchanges. The strongest ties having the most impact in the process of EU-China climate diplomacy are those which allow the EU and China to engage in dialogues that are constructive to climate change cooperation. The strongest ties are the formal institutional channels of cooperation which are paramount in EU-China relations as they provide 'political momentum to advance effective cooperation'.[58] The EU-China summits are 'the most important avenue' for advancing EU-China cooperation in climate change. EU-China summits are occasions where 'evidence of diplomatic progress is often required and leaders will ask for deliverables'.[59] After the summits, the EU and China often achieve vital negotiation breakthroughs and issue post-summit joint statements featuring important

[58] Interviews, Brussels, 2 December 2016
[59] Interview, 9 June 2016, Brussels

climate change decisions.[60]

Informal diplomatic channels and institutional settings often provide opportunities for frank dialogues between China and the EU, and allow negotiators to address current challenges and potential barriers in their cooperation. Trust and mutual understanding are built more easily when institutions can self-organise which increases collective climate ambitions.[61] Informal exchanges among the business community, decision-makers and civil society representatives are essential to discover more feasible cooperation agendas between the EU and China, which encourage the creation of win-win situations and mutual benefits through international cooperation (Holzer and Zhang, 2008). Experienced climate negotiators have observed that one of the most effective ways of strengthening EU-China cooperation was by engaging enterprises, technical experts and governmental institutions. For example, the NDRC's engagement and consultation with research and academic communities feed into the decisions of policy-makers.[62] The consultation and the sharing of experience between the central decision-makers and stakeholders in the periphery produces many benefits. Most often in the form of technical working group exchanges, these interactions improve accountability for industry stakeholders, and could make policies more effective. This 'new making' of climate governance that entails dialogue among multiple climate-related stakeholders facilitates understanding between parties and raises climate ambition.[63]

A well-coordinated decision-making structure is underpinned by frequent intergovernmental decision-making in climate policy. As a senior official noted, frequent

[60] Interview, 27 May 2016, Brussels
[61] Interview, 3 June 2016, Brussels
[62] Interview, 22 July 2016, Beijing
[63] Interview, 15 March 2018

talks suggest that discussions have been constructive, a fast-paced trajectory of the EU-China climate change relationship implies that 'we are in it to win it'.[64] This is because increasing interactions between the EU and China enable both sides to find opportunities to overcome coordination challenges, and to facilitate shared intentions to develop, as 'it takes time to build trust and shared climate ambition'.[65] The ETS cooperation has been 'enhanced with more communication and face-to-face meetings. This enhanced cooperation enabled the 1st project to conclude successfully with additional activities and a future second follow-up project.[66] It is normal that before the summits bilateral talks and contacts intensify. The intensified contacts contribute to the implementation of the project that is built on increasing transparency, and allow the EU and China to prioritise their needs with certain flexibility during the process. The importance of this 'bottom up approach is to build trust and confidence' between Chinese and European stakeholders.[67] As 'good coordination is important for the implementation of the project.'[68]

In short, balanced structural coordination was vital for the development of EU-China shared intentions in the process of EU-China climate change relationship-building. EU-China shared intentions manifest as EU-China shared climate ambition emanates from the increasingly institutionalised network-structure in EU-China climate change relations. The multiple institutional actors and dialogues in the dynamics of EU-China climate change relations rely on a 'symbiotic relationship with intragovernmental and

[64] Interview, 20 April 2017, Brussels
[65] Interview, EU and Chinese climate negotiators
[66] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project, Meeting of Project Steering Committee (PSC), 22 March 2016
[67] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project, Meeting of Project Steering Committee (PSC), 22 March 2016
[68] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project, First Meeting of Project Steering Committee (PSC), 20 May 2014

intergovernmental coordination'.[69] Not only do the multitude of mechanisms in the process attest to the importance the EU and China accord to climate change, but they also offer the platform for discussing potential solutions to alleviate differences, generate mutual understanding in accelerating the progress of the ETS project and the wider EU-China climate change cooperation. As negotiators noticed, 'with the right coordination, the meetings will produce intended results, but also unexpected positive impact on furthering EU-China cooperation'.[70] Balanced institutional coordination that entails strong connections between and within the centrality and periphery of the EU-China climate change network facilitated EU-China ETS cooperation in which the shared intentions manifest as EU-China shared climate ambition played out its transformative effect.

6.4 Substance

The substance negotiated in the process of EU-China ETS cooperation was characterised by complex political and technical issues. At its core, climate change is not just an environmental issue, it is interlinked with every policy.[71] Climate change negotiations are informed by scientific knowledge, with an increasing inter-linkage among other issues which has increased its complexity, affecting the actors and processes, and determining how climate change is addressed (Penetrante, 2013). The magnitude of the complexity prolongs climate talks, especially in the search for a constructive and effective negotiation agreement with regard to the long term regime building process (Sjöstedt and Penetrante, 2013, p.12). The climate change negotiation processes are characterised by 'a high degree of complexity informed by the collective actions of many participants' (Bjola, 2014). In light of proposition two in the model of diplomatic relationship-building, the dynamism

[69] Interview, 2 June 2016, Brussels.
[70] Interview, Brussels, 18 May 2018
[71] Interview, Brussels, 15 June 2018

and impact of complex substance in the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building is a process by which negotiating technical and political issues are being translated into developing shared intentions in EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. The following will explain the ways in which the EU and China have managed to negotiate complex substance, bridge the differences of priorities in the process of EU-China ETS cooperation, and the factor of EU-China shared intentions contributing to the EU and China's management of climate change priorities. EU-China ETS cooperation is articulated around political and technical 'joint priorities' embedded in the dual process of EU-China bilateral climate change interactions and the bigger context of the multilateral international climate negotiations

The EU's priority is embedded in Article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) which defines 'promoting measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, and in particular combating climate change' as one of the four objectives to which EU environmental policy should contribute (Art. 191(1) TFEU). In the case of EU-China ETS cooperation, the EU's priority is to provide technical assistance to support design and implementation of emissions trading systems in China, to assist China in its low carbon development efforts, and to support China in meeting the 'environmental, energy- and carbon-intensity targets defined in the 12th Five Year Development Plan and the targets expected in the 13th Five Year Development Plan 2016-2020'.[72] The project is of 'high priority' for the EU whose expectation is to 'see progress from China in terms of designing and implementing a national ETS'.[73] China's priority is to develop 'emissions trading capacity building in

[72] Supporting the Design and Implementation of Emissions Trading Systemes in China, Project Steering Committee 2016.
[73] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project, Meeting of Project Steering Committee (PSC), 22 March 2016

China' and to improve 'the capability of all relevant stakeholders in China ETS to enlarge and deepen China's ETS knowledge'.[74] The key objective is for China to learn from the EU's experience and expertise in designing and implementing successful emissions trading pilot projects that may lead to an eventual nationwide ETS.[75]

The process of negotiating the priority issues was shaped by four 'milestones' that contributed to the cooperation between the EU and China on emissions trading systems. The milestones are similar in the idea of 'turning point' in international negotiations (Druckman, 2001), which are the 'events that mark passage from one stage to the next, signalling progress from earlier to later phases' (Druckman, 2001). Amongst many other, turning points may be 'key events as resolving an impasse, signing a framework agreement, developing formulas and then bargaining over details […] or resolving the decision dilemma in the endgame' (Druckman, 2001). In this vein, each 'milestone' in this study serves to track the evolution of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building in the field of climate change. With each milestone the momentum of EU-China cooperation may have faltered, aggravating the difficulty of developing further cooperation; or a milestone may have contributed to the strengthening of EU-China climate change relationship. The timeline of the EU-China ETS cooperation is visualised below:

[74] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project, Meeting of Project Steering Committee, 20 May 2014
[75] Interview, Beijing, 25 July 2016

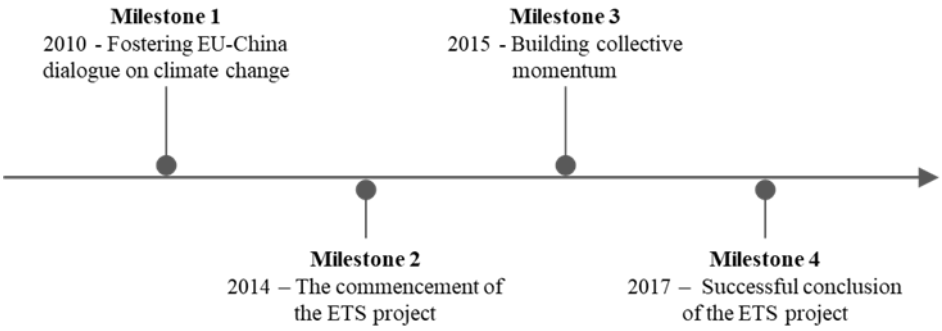


Figure 13 Cooperation timeline

6.4.1 Development of EU-China ETS collaboration

Milestone 1: 2010 - Fostering respective decarbonisation action and EU-China dialogue on climate change

2010 fostered the alignment of political priorities in EU-China climate change cooperation. It was the disaccord at the Copenhagen summit between the EU and China that exacerbated the necessity for both regions to find common grounds in their political priorities, and to start concrete cooperation projects on climate change. 2010 was the genesis of the EU-China ETS cooperation project.[76] The United Nations Climate Change Conference COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009 failed to reach an international agreement to tackle climate change, and exposed the lack of coordination between developing and developed regions in tackling climate change. It was by far the darkest moment in EU-China climate relations.[77] It also brought to the fore the need to build high-level political support in climate cooperation which underscored the urgency of cooperation between the EU and China.[78] The defeat of finding a global agreement at Copenhagen also marked the beginning of the 'logic of coordination', a process characterised as bottom-up that is founded on national policies combatting global warming, which departed

[76] Interview, Brussels, 25 May 2016
[77] Interview, Brussels, 22 March 2018
[78] Interview, Brussels, 22 March 2018

from the logic of relying solely on international agreements of UNFCCC-nature to mitigate global warming (Gemenne, 2013).

In the post-Copenhagen soul-searching period, the EU and China both established climate change cooperation as top priorities in their political agendas. In April 2010, EU-China climate cooperation was given impetus by a high-level mission of the European Commission to China. Led by the first European Commissioner for Climate Action, a delegation of the European Commission met with a group of senior Chinese officials headed by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) in April 2010. On the occasion, the EU and China issued one of the most important EU-China joint statements to date the *Joint Statement on Dialogue and Cooperation on Climate Change*. This Joint Statement builds upon the 2005 Joint Declaration to establish a 'regular dialogue on climate change' and a 'Climate Change Hotline' with the aim to strengthen 'the formulation and implementation of concrete cooperation projects on climate change', and to enhance effective 'exchange of views on critical issues in international negotiations on climate change and domestic policies and measures'.[79] As such, the 2010 EU-China Joint Statement institutionalised a regular climate dialogue between China and the EU, which was particularly important in establishing informal and formal discussions at the political level.[80]

Political discussions on the EU side advanced EU-China climate change cooperation. The Copenhagen climate summit was the catalyst of the creation of DG Climate, and a 'turning point for climate change issues to be included in the EU's foreign policy and diplomacy'[81].

[79] Joint Statement on Dialogue and Cooperation on Climate Change
[80] Interview, 6 April 2017, Brussels
[81] Interview, 7 December 2016, Brussels

The EU ETS was first introduced by Directive 2003/87, which the Council and the Parliament approved in October 2003 (EU 2003b), the legislation initially applied to a few sectors and the scope was gradually extended to a broader range of areas. Finally set up in 2005, the EU ETS is now the world's first and biggest international emissions trading system, accounting for over three-quarters of international carbon trading. The EU is currently improving its ETS and working towards green growth under the goals of Europe 2020 and the 7th Environmental Action Programme.

Political progress on the Chinese side facilitated the development of the ETS project. The developments in China's environmental policy accumulated in 'China's 12th Five-Year Plan and the environmental targets for building a resource-efficient and environment-friendly society', which was a stepping stone for EU-China climate change bilateral cooperation.[82] China's economic and social reform is underpinned by its Five-Year Plans that serves as a strategic roadmap for the country's development. The Five-Year Plans set out ambitious targets and policies on energy and climate change issues. In particular, the Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2011–2015) adopted by China in March 2011 established an ambitious new target of 'gradually establish[ing] a carbon trade market'. This marked the start of the seven pilot ETS projects in China, and the inception of a nation-wide system of emissions trading.

Against this background, negotiations about the EU supporting China to establish and develop its emissions trading system intensified. The 15th EU-China Summit held in 2012 advanced the cooperation between the EU and China on carbon markets. As stated in *the Joint Press Communiqué 15th EU-China Summit: Towards a stronger EU-China*

[82] Minutes of the 4th EU-China Policy Dialogue on Environment, 8 February 2012

Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, both China and the EU agreed to 'further deepen policy dialogue and pragmatic cooperation on tackling climate change as well as promoting low-carbon development under the EU-China Climate Change Partnership. They agreed to enhance practical cooperation on Emission Trading System building on the concrete cooperation initiatives agreed in this area'.[83] The financing of the project and plans for the EU to 'assist China in its efforts to meet its emission reduction targets and boost low carbon development; designing and implementing successful emissions trading pilot programmes that lead over time to effective, nation-wide action' was agreed in an agreement on financing the environment and transitioning to a low-carbon economy between the EU and China in September 2012. The financing agreement set 'a concrete example of how we [the EU and China] can work in partnership to tackle global and shared challenges' and was 'an important step for an ever closer cooperation towards a robust international carbon market'.[84] As then EU Climate Action Commissioner pointed 'it makes a significant difference when now also China wants to use carbon markets to reduce emissions cost-effectively and boost low-carbon technologies. Our joint commitment to carbon markets shows the potential and benefits of smart climate policies' (European Commission, 2012).

Milestone 2: 2014 - The commencement of the ETS project and strengthening of EU-China climate partnership

The commencement of the ETS project was an important milestone in that it reflected the EU and China's (domestic) political imperatives in enhancing climate cooperation, and further strengthened the joint political priorities in EU-China climate cooperation. The

[83] Joint Press Communiqué 15th EU-China Summit: Towards a stronger EU-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, Brussels, 20 September 2012, Council of the European Union, 14022/12 PRESSE 388

[84] European Commission, The European Union and China join forces to address environment, urbanization and climate change challenges, Press Release IP/12/989, Brussels, 20 September 2012

official commencement of the EU-China ETS project in 2014 was underpinned by strong political leadership. The 10th anniversary of the establishment of EU-China Strategic Partnership in 2013 was a key stepping stone to strengthening EU-China climate relations. China published its 2nd policy paper on the EU, and both the EU and China issued the *EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation* with considerable commitment expressed by both sides to step up joint efforts to tackle climate change. It enabled the EU and China to recognise joint political priorities and that cooperative efforts to address environmental issues were important to ensure the successful implementation of environment-related activities and projects, including the emissions trading systems cooperation project. The EU and China strengthened climate-related mechanisms, in particular the EU-China Environment Policy Dialogue was upgraded 'into the framework of EU-China Summit, and the outputs of the Dialogue should be continually reported to the leaders on both sides'.[85]

There was strong internal political support for climate action within the EU institutions. The EU's policy framework for climate and energy in 2020-2030 was formulated in January 2014, which mapped out the EU's objectives and policy targets for the period 2020-2030, the climate component had close links to global efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions and the international climate agreement in Paris in 2015 (European Commission, 2014). The 2030 climate and energy policy framework for the European Union clearly stated that the EU's climate policy is related to the long-term decarbonisation strategy of the EU.[86]

In light of these political developments, both the EU and China expressed their intention to

[85] Minutes of the 4th EU-China Policy Dialogue on Environment, 8th February 2012
[86] Interview, Brussels, 25 May 2016

enhance climate change cooperation on their 'key joint priorities'. In January 2014, the EU and China started discussions about the EU-China project on technology transfer and capacity-building which was supported by the European Commission and China's NDRC.[87] The first Policy Steering Committee of the EU-China ETS project, organised by China's NDRC and the EU's DG CLIMA agreed that five million euros funding for the ETS cooperation would be provided by the European Commission's DG DEVCO. The first meeting of EU-China ETS cooperation's Project Steering Committee (PSC) took place on 20th May 2014 in Beijing. It represented the start of the 'implementation phase' of the EU-China ETS cooperation project.[88] Both sides identified their joint priorities in climate cooperation, indicating the form of cooperation activities and outputs expected throughout the implementation of the ETS project. With the commencement of the implementation phase of EU-China ETS cooperation, the EU stated that the project would 'allow China to benefit from the experience the EU has gathered in terms of emissions trading', and that it could help China as the largest emitter of greenhouse gases to 'achieve its emission reduction objectives'.[89] The first meeting of the PSC prioritised that the most important activities of the ETS was to hold both specific and high-level trainings so that more Chinese stakeholders could have the opportunities to learn from EU experiences, and that China could be best assisted in its establishing of China's national ETS.

Milestone 3: 2015 – Building collective momentum, 40th Anniversary of EU-China diplomatic relations and the Accord de Paris

2015 was instrumental for the development of the emissions trading system cooperation between the EU and China. Political and diplomatic achievements in EU-China bilateral

[87] Interview, 1 December 2016, Brussels
[88] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project, May 20th 2014
[89] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project, May 20th 2014

relations and international climate politics accelerated the ETS agenda in EU-China climate change collaboration in 2015. Of particular political importance was the 40th anniversary of EU-China diplomatic relations, which gave the EU-China ETS cooperation further impetus. The 40th anniversary of EU-China diplomatic relations had significant 'symbolic' importance, it was a 'diplomatic tool to further strengthen every facet of EU-China relations'.[90] To celebrate the anniversary, in 2014 the Chinese top leadership's visit to the three principle EU institutions – the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament – was the first of its genre in the history of EU-China relations.[91] Both sides 'agreed that this first visit by the Chinese President to the European Union was a historic landmark in EU-China relations. They welcomed the significant strengthening of bilateral ties over the last 40 years, which have benefitted both sides and the world as a whole, and underlined their determination to strengthen the global dimension of their cooperation'.[92]

In June 2015, at the 17th bilateral summit, the EU and China agreed to step up the EU-China Partnership in climate change and issued the *EU-China Joint Statement on Climate Change*. Both sides 'recognised that climate change is one of the greatest threats facing humanity, and that they play critical roles in addressing global climate issues'. [93] The two sides aimed to foster a closer relationship on climate change that builds on a 'decade of successful cooperation'.[94] Building on the achievements, a series of technical

[90] Interview, Brussels, 3 June 2016
[91] Interview, Brussels, 6 June 2016
[92] European Commission, Joint Statement: Deepening the EU-China comprehensive strategic partnership for mutual benefit, Brussels, 31 March 2014
[93] EU-China Summit joint statement: The way forward after forty years of EU-China cooperation, 29 June 2015, available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23732/150629-eu-china-summit-joint-statement-final.pdf
[94] EU-China Summit joint statement: The way forward after forty years of EU-China cooperation, 29 June 2015, available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23732/150629-eu-china-summit-joint-statement-final.pdf

exchanges and political negotiations between the EU and China in 2016 enhanced carbon market cooperation. The 6th EU-China ministerial Dialogue on Environment Policy, and the EU's DG ENV's high level mission for Circular Economy to China in November provided both sides with the state of play of EU-China green cooperation and confirmed that climate change was a 'major strategic priority for the economic and social development of both sides'.[95] Furthermore, the signature of the EU-China Energy Cooperation Roadmap in July 2016 signaled a new step ahead in the energy cooperation between the European Union and China.

The strong political will from both sides translated into stronger technical-level climate commitment and climate action policies, which were evident in the development of the respective domestic decarbonisation policies of the EU and China. 'Green development' was adopted as a key element in China's development strategy. Low-carbon development and climate action featured prominently in China's 13th Five Year Plan (2016-2020). Moreover, China confirmed its plan to launch a national carbon market, in light of the successful implementation of China's regional ETS pilot projects which was to 'test the water' for the eventual launch of a national emission trading system in China.[96]

At the time when China's ETS development reached a watershed moment, the EU's ETS also underwent significant development. Renewed political will advanced the EU's domestic climate action. Coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the EU ETS in 2015, the European Commission presented in July 2015 a legislative proposal to revise the EU emissions trading system (EU ETS) for the period after 2020 as part of its

[95] Minutes of the 6th EU-China Ministerial Dialogue on Environment Policy, 24 May 2016, Brussels.
[96] Interview, Beijing, 17 November 2017

contribution to the Paris Agreement.[97] It was the first step in delivering on the EU's target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% domestically by 2030, in line with the 2030 climate and energy policy framework. After extensive negotiations, the European Parliament and the Council formally supported the revision in February 2018. And the revised EU ETS Directive (Directive (EU) 2018/410) entered into force on 8 April 2018.[98] The EU also intensified its climate commitment in an important Council decision, that made climate change 'an inherent part of its foreign policy'. Moreover, in support of the international climate negotiations, the EU emphasised the needs to 'deliver a legally binding agreement applicable to all Parties that is universal, robust, inclusive, dynamic and ambitious, with a strong transparency and accountability framework to ensure trust between the parties'.[99]

Intensified political and technical negotiations in international climate diplomacy culminated in COP21 in Paris in 2015. The political momentum of climate negotiations at the global level injected new energy into EU-China climate cooperation.[100] The EU and China worked in 'a very constructive way to build the Accord de Paris at the Paris Climate Conference'.[101] The Accord de Paris, more widely known as the Paris Agreement brought to the fore the importance of emissions trading. Article 6 of the Paris Agreement underscored that countries' domestic mitigation goals could be met by using 'market mechanisms' such as carbon markets to provide flexible instruments for reducing the costs of cutting emission. This incentivised the EU and China to further strengthen their

[97] Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2003/87/EC to enhance cost-effective emission reductions and low-carbon investments, Brussels, 15 July 2015, COM(2015) 337 final, 2015/148(COD)
[98] European Commission, Climate Action, Revision for phase 4 (2021-2030), available at https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/ets/revision_en
[99] Council of the EU, Council conclusion on climate diplomacy, Press release 602/15, 20 July 2015
[100] Interview, 20 April 2017, Brussels
[101] Interview, 2 June 2016, Brussels

cooperation on carbon markets. Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) are at the heart of the Paris Agreement and embodies 'efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change' and their domestic mitigation measures.[102] Both the EU and China's emission trading projects serve to enable them to reach their NDCs cost effectively. The UNFCCC-led climate negotiations, and the associated obligations to reduce emissions promised under the Paris Accord encouraged the EU and China to actively strengthen their domestic mechanisms to reduce GHG, and to expand their ETS cooperation and to learn from each other's best practices.[103]

The negotiation of technical issues in the EU-China ETS cooperation entailed mainly the exchange of experience and related capacity building activities. The second meeting of the ETS Project Steering Committee (PSC) was held at China's MOFCOM in April 2015 marking the 'first year of the project implementation phase'. The technical guidance from the EU ensured a successful first year of the project implementation, around 500 people participated in the ETS project activities, including representatives from 'governmental departments, industries and other stakeholders related with China ETS design and implementation at both pilot and national level', this considerably raised the 'awareness of China's ETS stakeholders and provided benefits and support to China's environmental protection work'.[104] It also raised the confidence in the 'maintenance' of the useful 'communication channels' between China and the EU in the 'technical cooperation field of the ETS', and underlined the importance of good cooperation between the EU and China on climate change related issues. Moreover, technical discussions helped 'China to identify the key ETS problems, address the related challenges and support the improvement of the

[102] The Paris Agreement and NDCs, available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs
[103] Interview, 20 March 2018, Brussels
[104] Minutes of the EU-China ETS Project, Second Meeting of Project Steering Committee, 28 April 2015

ETS design, policy framework and implementation', which could be useful for both sides.[105] The technical success reinforced and demonstrated the 'importance of the project as a joint effort of EU and China to cope with climate change', and demonstrated the 'political importance of emission trading in Europe' and the ETS equally being a powerful policy tool for China to tackle climate change.[106]

Milestone 4: 2017 Successful conclusion of the ETS project and launch of a second ETS project

2017 opened a new chapter in EU-China ETS cooperation, with the launch of a second and more ambitious ETS collaboration project between the EU and China. It epitomised the renewal of joint political and technical priorities shared between the EU and China in taking up more concrete climate action. The third Policy Steering Committee of EU-China ETS cooperation took place in March 2016. Officials and carbon market stakeholders from the EU and China reviewed the progress of the cooperation and agreed to step up cooperation on carbon markets. During the meeting of 'strategic importance' both sides confirmed that the project 'played an important role in the past two years to give a new impetus to Chinese national ETS development', and that the project 'gave great and robust support to China's national ETS development'.[107] The success of the EU-China ETS cooperation inspired the EU and China to launch a second project to support the establishment of China's national ETS. This second emissions trading co-operation project entails a €10 million funding to essentially help China launch its national ETS.[108] The new three-year project is a capacity-building project tailed to China's needs from a technical

[105] Minutes of the EU-China ETS Project, 28 April 2015
[106] Minutes of the EU-China ETS Project, 28 April 2015
[107] Minutes of the EU-China ETS Project, 22 March 2016
[108] European Commission, *EU, China to boost carbon market cooperation ahead of China launch*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news/eu-china-boost-carbon-market-cooperation-ahead-china-launch_en

point of view. While the political aspect of the project entails the establishment of a policy platform for the EU and China to increase mutual understanding and share information.[109]

Coinciding with the renewal of the ETS project was the official launch of China's national emissions trading system in December 2017. Regarded as a 'game changer' in tackling climate change, the launch of China's national ETS promised to 'pave the way for China to establish the world's to-be largest carbon market' (Financial Times, 2017). This attest to the fact that carbon trading has become 'China's way of tackling global warming' and 'China's domestic climate action is of strategic importance'.[110] Technical discussions intensified with strong alignment of technical objectives. Technical cooperation of EU-China environment cooperation was formalised into an agreement in 2017. As stated in the EU-China *Agreed Principles to promote enhanced technical cooperation between the Directorate-General for Environment of the European Commission and the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People's Republic of China*, 'good environmental governance is reflected in both China's 13th Five Year Plan and the EU's 7th Environmental Action Programme', China and the EU are both developing models for green growth and initiatives for significant structural changes to their economies', both sides are committed to enhancing technical cooperation to contribute to green growth and to implement 'the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development both domestically and internationally'.

High-level political support was particularly potent in accelerating the negotiations of political issues. In spring 2017, EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy visited China, where high-level meetings between the EU and China's NDRC and NEA were completed with exchanges between Chinese and European energy companies, NGOs and

[109] Interview, 7 December 2016, Brussels
[110] Interview, 25 July 2016, Beijing

think-tanks. The EU's high-level mission to China was critical and timely, which allowed 'the EU and China to show joint leadership and explore how they can reinforce their strong commitment to the 2015 Paris Agreement especially ahead of the 19th EU-China summit in June 2017'.[111] Furthermore, the mission affirmed the political commitment that the EU and China are 'joining forces to forge ahead on the implementation of the Paris Agreement and accelerate the global transition to clean energy'.[112] In summer 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance Cooperation on Emissions Trading was signed. The ETS cooperation was elevated to the agenda of ministerial negotiations, promising to provide a framework for intensifying EU-China climate cooperation. The European Commission and China's newly-created Ministry of Ecology and Environment held 'their first policy dialogue on emissions trading in Beijing on 26 April, following the recent launch of China's nationwide carbon trading system' (European Commission, 2018). As such, EU-China dialogue on climate change had been strengthened with both sides launching a policy dialogue dedicated to emission trading.[113]

The political momentum in multilateral climate change negotiations presented valuable opportunities for intensifying EU-China carbon market cooperation. The negotiators and stakeholders of the ETS project leveraged international events, especially the UNFCC climate negotiations to advance the priorities in the collaboration. The increasing political and economic significance of China in global climate governance was brought to the fore in light of the US administration's announcement to leave the Paris Climate Agreement. The potential void left by the US emboldened both the EU and China to step up their joint

[111] European Commission, Commissioner Arias Cañete in China to strengthen climate and clean energy ties, 28 March 2017, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/news/commissioner-arias-ca%C3%B1ete-china-strengthen-climate-and-clean-energy-ties

[112] ibid.

[113] Interview, 15 May 2018, Brussels

climate actions. In June 2016, the EU adopted a new EU policy vis-à-vis China entitled ‘Elements for a new EU strategy on China’, which mapped out the EU’s relationship with China for the next five years, climate change was elevated to a high priority in the EU’s strategy. Moreover, the reform of the EU emissions trading system for the period after 2020 was intensely debated in EU policy circles in Brussels in 2017, and was eventually endorsed by both the Council and the European Parliament. This marked a significant step in the EU’s ETS policy and broader climate diplomacy, as the ETS reform is believed to help the EU to ‘deliver on its target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030, as agreed under the 2030 climate and energy framework and the Paris Agreement’ (Council of the European Union, 2017).

6.4.2 Negotiating substance and EU-China shared intentions in EU-China climate change diplomacy

The substance negotiated in EU-China ETS cooperation entailed complex political and technical issues. As proposition two in the model of diplomatic relationship-building posits, it could be expected that the more complex the substance, the more difficult it would be for negotiators to reach consensus on different diplomatic objectives and the more challenges are entailed in the negotiation process for parties to reach alignment. Divergence on complex political and technical issues may impede the development of shared intentions and the progress of the relationship-building process, while issue convergence enhances the process and incentivises stronger cooperation. Retracing the development of EU-China ETS cooperation highlights the fact that EU-China shared intentions were crucial for EU-China climate change cooperation. EU-China shared intentions, in all its intensity, conveyed a certain ‘we-feeling’ enabling the EU and China to work together. Shared intentions are particularly potent in climate negotiations, as ‘the need for urgent, strong,

co-operative action based on mutual trust and understanding has never been higher' in climate action, and that 'a spirit of collective responsibility resonates more than ever' (OECD, 2019). EU-China shared intentions, manifest in the 'we-ness' between the EU and China sharing climate ambition were vital to the EU and China achieving successful cooperation in emissions trading systems. The shared intentions encouraged the EU and China to manage often competing political and technical priorities. Each milestone contributed to the build-up of EU-China shared climate ambition, that was shaped by the alignment of political and technical priority issues in the climate change negotiations.

The development of EU-China ETS cooperation shows that EU-China climate change relations have developed significantly in parallel with the strengthening of EU-China shared intentions manifest in both sides sharing greater climate ambition. Since 2005, the institutionalised EU-China cooperation on climate change spanned from concrete technological cooperation projects to high-level collective climate action at multilateral settings and international climate negotiations, the EU and China have signed three joint statements on climate change and have been implementing increasingly concrete climate change-related projects, with the EU-China ETS project being the 'flagship' and most successful cooperation between the EU and China in the area of climate change. The project has been 'the most efficient and effective EU-China cooperation project' and 'playing an important role to China's industrial, economy and social transformation and upgrading'.[114] This significant development attests to the increasing level of maturity in EU-China collective climate action. The diplomatic substance in EU-China ETS cooperation consisted of the long-term objectives and short-term priorities, both of complex political and technical nature. The strengthening of shared climate ambition in

[114] Minutes of the EU-China ETS Project, 22 March 2016

EU-China climate change relationship-building was in parallel with the gradual alignment of the priority issues between the EU and China.

The alignment of political and technical priorities translated into the strengthening of EU-China shared climate ambition in the process of EU-China climate change relationship-building. Shared intentions were vital in both the political and technical phases of the EU-China ETS talks. As milestone one shows, EU-China climate change cooperation evolved on the basis of the respective domestic climate change policies of the EU and China, and were embedded in the geopolitics of climate change negotiations. Before 2009, climate talks between the EU and China were 'difficult and weak, because China's green agenda was not a priority issue, and the EU was focusing on consolidating its single voice and role in international climate politics'.[115] The major economic forums provided avenues of exchanges for both China and the EU to 'internationalise their national climate action' especially after the financial crisis. The EU's establishment of its diplomatic service – the EEAS with the Lisbon Treaty reforms enabled the EU to have more 'coordination and professionalism in its climate diplomatic efforts'.[116] The Chinese 'vision on climate mitigation' in 2010 allowed EU-China climate change cooperation to be 'more realistic, technical, and durable'.[117]

The process of negotiating political issues and especially the gradual alignment of political priorities contributed to the continuous strengthening of EU-China shared climate ambition. Milestone three of the ETS development shows that in the EU-China efforts to build collective climate momentum in 2015, EU-China shared intentions were strengthened by

[115] Interview, 6 November 2017, Bonn
[116] Interview, 17 May 2018, Brussels
[117] Interview, 23 February 2016, Beijing

the confidence China showed to shoulder climate mitigation responsibilities as an aspiring 'responsible great power' in the UNFCCC negotiations, and especially in the lead up to the Paris Agreement, and that China would learn from the EU experience. In line with China's political priority, the EU demonstrated strong political will to continue its 'leadership' influence in international carbon market, not only did the EU commence the Revision for phase 4 (2021-2030) of its own EU ETS, but also encouraged more ambitious emission reduction targets with China.

The political alignment of EU-China climate priorities culminated in milestone four, the successful conclusion of the EU-China ETS project, which was conducive for EU-China climate change cooperation and contributed to developing EU-China shared climate ambition. Political support for the EU-China ETS cooperation was essential in strengthening policy mechanisms on climate change. As negotiators noted 'high level political dialogue between EU and China' can 'provide not only capacity building for individuals but also institutional improvement', and even 'sometimes smaller group with high level representatives made key things happen more efficiently than larger groups without political representatives'.[118] It is 'important to maintain good cooperation and mutual trust' between the central institutions.[119] The ETS cooperation between the EU and China 'has been enhanced with more communication and face-to-face meetings. The enhanced political cooperation and the political commitment to tackle climate change enabled [the launch of] the more ambitious EU-China ETS project'.[120]

Amongst the complex, myriad issues under negotiation in EU-China climate change

[118] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project PSC, 28 April 2015
[119] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project PSC, 28 April 2015
[120] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project PSC, 22 March 2016

cooperation, low-carbon development is an important joint political priority. In the EU-China Memorandum of Understanding on Circular Economy Cooperation signed in July 2018, both the EU and China confirmed that emission reduction measures could become economic opportunities. Developing a low-carbon economy has emerged as a major strategic direction in China's development agenda. Similarly for the EU, one of the 10 Commission priorities for 2014-19 is Energy Union and Climate. The reform of the EU ETS has a positive impact on the EU's assistance in helping China develop its ETS, and in return, China's experiences and lessons learned in the process also benefit the EU.[121] The low carbon development path that both China and the EU are committed to presented opportunity for both sides to collaborate in the emerging and growing sector of low-carbon technology innovation.[122]

EU-China shared intentions, as expressed in EU-China shared climate ambition in the EU-China ETS cooperation, proved potent to enable breakthroughs in overcoming the technical challenges of establishing emissions trading system. As milestone two the strengthening of EU-China climate partnership shows, once consensus was reached at the political level, EU-China climate talks shifted to the technical details of the ETS project. It was acknowledged from the outset of the ETS collaboration that emissions trading system was not 'one-size-fits-all', and that a Chinese emission trading system needs to be 'adapted to the Chinese circumstances like the European system is adapted to European circumstances'.[123] Each emissions trading system should have its 'specific features that appear right and appropriate in the light of the prevailing specific circumstances of the

[121] Interview, 8 June 2018, Brussels
[122] Interview, 20 March 2019, Brussels
[123] Interview, 20 July 2016, Beijing

country concerned'.[124] As a knowledge-based cooperation, the technical discussions centred on assessing the EU ETS and applying relevant aspects to the Chinese context, the fundamental question was 'would the whole ETS system work in China or would only aspects of EU ETS function in China?'.[125] Whether or not the sophisticated EU ETS could be adopted in its entirety in China, or only the basics could be functioning in China, due to the specific Chinese circumstances, became important technical issues of discussion in the ETS cooperation.[126] Technical issues became more complex when the ETS cooperation's technical priority shifted from developing pilot projects to the establishment of China's national ETS, which was proposed in 2015. In this regard, capacity building to train the trainers was essential in establishing carbon market in China to train more knowledgeable people in the carbon industry.[127] Train the trainers technical activities 'contributed to the deepening and enlargement of China ETS knowledge basis', and 'strategically supported the development of institutional capacity at industry and sectoral association level' and in building 'strong institutional capacity for local DRCs and research institutes' in China.[128]

The alignment of technical priorities was vital in EU-China ETS cooperation, as it contributed to the development of EU-China shared climate ambition, increasing China's willingness to learn from the EU in terms of technical expertise, and the EU willingness to share best practice with China. The build up to milestone four, the launch of the second EU-China ETS cooperation project saw many technical-level study meetings take place between both sides to enhance technical cooperation. The technical talks enabled EU experts to understand China's circumstances, and enabled China to know more about the

[124] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project, PSC Meeting, May 20th 2014
[125] Interview, 10 March 2017
[126] Interview, 15 June 2018, Brussels
[127] Interview, 22 July 2016, Beijing
[128] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project, 22 March 2016

technology-related issues in the EU ETS.[129] The EU-China ETS cooperation is the 'axis of EU-China climate change cooperation' and technical cooperation played an important role in enhancing EU-China climate cooperation.[130] Technology transfer, clean technology and green finance, as well as issues such as emissions trading system cap setting and allocation were essential components of the technical discussions. EU expertise and technology played an instrumental role in fostering the technical talks and cooperation in climate change.

Strong political will and leadership on climate action facilitated the alignment of political priorities between the EU and China, and increased the ambition of wider climate action. The EU and China share 'a common goal in addressing global environmental issues', which constitute 'their priorities for possible future cooperation'.[131] The negotiations of political and technical issues enhanced the concomitant process of building EU-China shared intentions and generated diplomatic pathways to achieve mutually beneficial international climate cooperation. EU-China shared intentions were particularly pertinent to EU-China ETS cooperation which was not simply a capacity-building, technology-transfer cooperation, but also a 'confidence and trust-building' initiative between the EU and China.[132] The development of EU-China shared climate ambition culminated in the launch of a second emissions trading systems follow-up project that was more ambitious than the first EU-China ETS cooperation, which could 'enhance the cooperation between the EU and China on policies tackling climate change by continuing

[129] Interview, 1 December 2016, Brussels
[130] Interview, 26 February 2016, Beijing
[131] Minutes, 4th EU-China Policy Dialogue on Environment, Brussels, 8th February 2012
[132] Interview, 2 December 2016, Brussels

and reinforcing cooperation on emission trading'.[133] In short, the process of negotiating climate change substance was a process of the alignment of priorities translated into strengthening the foundational underpinning of EU-China climate change relationship-building – the EU-China shared climate ambition.

6.5 Style

EU-China ETS cooperation was also influenced by the dialogue of EU and Chinese climate diplomatic styles. Style in this study captures the unique characteristics of EU climate diplomacy and Chinese climate diplomacy. Climate change diplomatic style encompasses the 'macro-level' diplomatic strategies of China and the EU vis-à-vis climate change and the 'micro-level' Chinese way and European way of working in general, and negotiation style in particular. Per proposition three in the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building, different diplomatic styles may render the development of EU-China shared intentions difficult. At the macro-level, dissonance between Chinese and European climate change diplomatic styles may require more time and resources to enable parties to become familiar with each other. On the other hand, consonance between the EU and China's diplomatic styles in climate change may facilitate mutual understanding and EU-China shared intentions to develop, therefore enable more effective cooperation. The micro-level of EU and Chinese negotiation styles fall respectively under the rubric of 'low-context' and 'high-context' negotiation styles as detailed in chapter three. The characteristics of the EU and China's climate diplomatic strategies paired with the different patterns of Chinese and EU way of communication and negotiation influenced the development of EU-China ETS cooperation. The consonance of climate change

[133] ANNEX 1 of the Commission Implementing Decision on the 2016 Annual Action programme for the Partnership Instrument - Action Fiche for Platform for Policy Dialogue and Cooperation between EU and China on Emissions Trading

diplomatic styles enhanced EU-China shared intentions, manifest as shared climate ambition between the EU and China, which created a vision of cooperation that was vital to the success of the EU-China ETS cooperation and the increasingly intensifying EU-China climate change cooperation.

6.5.1 EU climate change diplomatic style

The EU-style climate change diplomacy exhibited a 'walk the talk' diplomatic style *à l'européenne* in the EU-China ETS cooperation. At the macro-level, the EU-style diplomacy manifests in two characteristic ways: on one hand, the EU is acting 'at home' in increasing its climate ambitions to meet its domestic decarbonisation goals; and on the other hand the EU is enhancing its contribution to international climate change governance especially through the UN-led climate negotiations. These characteristics of EU climate diplomacy is driven by the EU's pursuit of multilateralism and 'leadership by example' in its international climate policy.[134] The EU style of climate change diplomacy is anchored in the EU's internal policies, and its 'unrivalled level of diplomatic activities in the sphere of global climate negotiations' which highlight its leading role and efforts to combat climate change (Schunz, 2015; Gupta and Grubb, 2000).

The EU's internal climate policy developments provides a basis for the EU's leadership in international climate change diplomacy (Vogler, 2014). The idea that the EU 'walks the talk on acting at home' in combatting climate change is of utmost importance.[135] By raising its climate ambition and climate policies within the EU, the EU reinforces its 'walking the talk' diplomatic style and strengthens its capabilities in climate diplomacy. As

[134] Interview, Brussels, 9 December 2016
[135] Joint statement of the Estonian Presidency and the European Commission on behalf of the EU at COP23 UN Climate Change Conference, 16/11/2017

the EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy stated, the EU's path to climate protection 'begins here at home'.[136] The prime example of this rationale is the EU's efforts in developing the EU ETS. The EU ETS is a key policy instrument in the EU's internal climate policy and an important element in its external climate relations. It is a means to assert the EU's leadership role in global climate policy, as the EU sees itself a 'leader in the international carbon market' and the EU ETS a 'model avant-garde' for a global emission trading system.[137]

The fundamental aspect of the EU's 'walk the talk' diplomatic style lies in its ambitious and pioneering ETS that contributes to the EU achieving emissions reduction targets.[138] This view resonates in China's climate policy circles, as Chinese climate negotiations noted, one of the reasons the EU is considered as a pioneer in combatting climate change is the EU establishing the world's first emissions trading system.[139] Indeed, the EU's ETS is the world's first international greenhouse gas emissions trading system to come into effect and covers half of EU's CO2 emission across 31 countries. It is an essential element of the EU's way of achieving its decarbonisation goals, and strengthening the EU's climate diplomacy that entails both technical and political dimensions.[140] The technical dimension of the EU's climate diplomacy entails mainly technical outreach and international cooperation, such as the EU-China ETS cooperation; the political dimension entails using policy measures to ensure political alignment of climate ambitions within Europe and in international climate negotiations.[141] The EU has raised its climate ambition by proposing

[136] European Commission - Press release, Energy Union: secure, sustainable, competitive, affordable energy for every European, Brussels, 25 February 2015
[137] Interview, 20 April 2017, Brussels
[138] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project, May 20th 2014
[139] Interview, August 2017, Beijing
[140] Interview, 7 December 2018, Brussels
[141] Interview, 7 December 2018, Brussels

a new strategy for Europe to become 'the world's first major economy to go climate neutral by 2050', this 'long-term strategy is to create a vision and sense of direction', and inspire others 'how we can deliver collectively a clean planet and show that transforming our economy is possible and beneficial'.[142] Echoing this climate ambition, the EU's chief climate negotiators reinstated that 'if we [European Union] don't take the lead, nobody will do it. We need to show the world that we can become climate neutral and be more competitive. We have a moral responsibility to do so'.[143]

The EU's raising climate ambition at home has translated into the EU's pursuit of climate change multilateralism which has reinforced its 'walk the talk' climate diplomatic style.[144] The EU 'actively seeks a dialogue with partners on the future development of the global climate change regime'.[145] The EU believes that the EU 'can only achieve its goals by working with key international partners', and global environmental issues 'can only be solved with international collaboration'.[146] Climate diplomacy is 'an essential part of our [EU] foreign policy', as the EU's High Representative Federica Mogherini stated 'the conversation on climate change is global by definition, it is also a conversation on how to build win-win solutions, climate action is the most indisputable case for multilateralism'.[147] This aspect of the EU's 'walk the talk' diplomatic style incentivised the EU to contribute to capacity building for environmental protection in China. The EU's

[142] European Commission, *The Commission calls for a climate neutral Europe by 2050*, Press release IP/18/6543, Brussels, 28 November 2018
[143] Speech by Miguel Arias Cañete, European commissioner for climate action & energy, POLITICO 'Implementing the Paris Agreement: moving from paper to practice', 9 July 2019, Brussels
[144] Interview, 17 May 2018, Brussels
[145] Minutes of the meeting between Commissioner for Environment, European Commission and Minister, State Environmental Protection Administration, China, 14 June 2005, Brussels.
[146] Minutes of the 6th EU-China Ministerial Dialogue on Environment Policy, 24 May 2016, Brussels
[147] Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the high-level event "Climate, peace and security: the time for action", 22 June 2018, available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/47168/Mogherini%20at%20the%20high-level%20event%20%22Climate,%20peace%20and%20security:%20the%20time%20for%20action%22

influence in China's nation-wide emissions trading system can be considered one of the most prominent examples of the EU's 'walk the talk' diplomatic style in climate change.

The EU's walking the talk in tackling climate change is also manifest in the EU practicing a 'leadership-by-example' approach in international climate negotiations, and consistently advocating concrete 'targets and timetables' for climate action (Rayner and Jordan, 2016). As defined in the EU's new global strategy, the EU intends to 'lead by example by implementing its commitments on sustainable development and climate change. It will increase climate financing, drive climate mainstreaming in multilateral fora, raise the ambition' (EU Global Strategy, June 2016, p.40). The EU believes that 'When we inspire and encourage each other, we can go further, faster, together'.[148] This 'walk the talk' diplomatic style in climate change is particularly evident in the EU's role in the UNFCCC climate negotiations, as exemplified in the EU's leadership role during COP21 and the build-up to the Paris Agreement in 2015. The EU believes that 'every agreement is only as good as its implementation, and what we promised only has value if it translates into real action'.[149]

The EU's climate leadership style in the UNFCCC-led international negotiations was achieved through exercising 'structural leadership' by deploying 'power-resources that create incentives, costs and benefits that may sway other actors to change their behaviour', and 'ideas-based' leadership characterised as 'agenda setting effort and the discovering and proposing of joint solutions to collective problems' (Parker, Karlsson and Hjerpe, 2017). The EU's leadership style accentuated its role in international climate change diplomacy

[148] Joint statement of the Estonian Presidency and the European Commission on behalf of the EU at COP23 UN Climate Change Conference, 16/11/2017

[149] Joint statement of the Estonian Presidency and the European Commission on behalf of the EU at COP23 UN Climate Change Conference, 16/11/2017

especially after the Durban Climate Change conference (COP 17) in 2011.[150] Since COP 21 in 2015, the EU has raised even more ambitious climate goals aiming to reduce GHG emissions to 55% below 1990 levels by 2030.[151] The EU's commitment to 'walking the talk' as a leader in climate change is underpinned by the belief that 'we [the EU] are setting the bar even higher because we know we have the responsibility as European to lead by example in a world that needs actors and players in the world that can do that and that have the intention to do that'.[152]

Moreover, the style in which the EU works to achieve its diplomatic objectives is related with the EU's 'new role in the world of today and the expectations that […] the European Union to play a leading role, to be a point of reference, and a voice of rationality'.[153] The European way of working is essentially the 'partnership approach' that makes the EU more credible as a global power and 'makes us [the EU] different from most of other great powers' that is an approach based on trust' and about 'being present'.[154] The EU has translated the EU way of working with China 'from simply working *for* China, to working *with* China'.[155]

At the micro-level understanding of diplomatic style, the EU-style diplomacy falls under the category of 'low-context' negotiation style defined by Cohen to portray the more direct and informal negotiation style in 'low-context' cultures such as the US and Europe, in

[150] Interview, 6 April 2017, Brussels
[151] European Parliament, *European policies on climate and energy towards 2020, 2030 and 2050*
[152] Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the high-level event "Climate, peace and security: the time for action", 22 June 2018, available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/47168/Mogherini%20at%20the%20high-level%20event%20%22Climate,%20peace%20and%20security:%20the%20time%20for%20action%22
[153] Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the EU Ambassadors' Conference 2019, Brussels, 02/09/2019
[154] Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the EU Ambassadors' Conference 2019, Brussels, 02/09/2019
[155] Interview, 17 May 2018, Brussels

contrast to the more indirect negotiation style epitomised by the 'high-context' Chinese culture (Cohen, 1997). The European style of working and the EU's enhanced international climate action can be associated with its unique institutional configuration and aptitude for consensus making in negotiations. The EU's climate diplomatic style displays dynamics of a proactive style diplomacy based on coordination (Groen and Oberthür, 2013). This is because the EU's institutional structure predisposes the EU to 'frequent tactical manoeuvring and profound coordination' (Jørgensen, 2015). The EU's 'walk the talk' diplomatic style is determined by the fact that the EU's internal and external climate policies are intertwined, and the existence of a strong regulatory framework underpins the EU's activism at the international level and the EU's leadership in climate action in particular (Oberthür and Pallemaerts, 2010).

6.5.2 Chinese climate change diplomatic style

China's climate change diplomatic style exhibited a 'shoulder responsibility' (负责任) diplomatic style with Chinese characteristics in EU-China ETS cooperation. A complementary duality underpins this unique climate diplomatic style, which has been consolidated over the past decade through China's growing engagement in climate change diplomacy. On the one hand, China is 'increasingly shouldering responsibility of tackling climate change' (中国在气候变化治理方面在承担更多的国际责任) as the world's second largest economic power, and on the other China being a developing country is 'learning and doing at the same time' (边学边做).[156] Climate change is both a domestic and a diplomatic matter for China, the two cannot be dissociated.[157] This duality is infused by the domestic and international imperatives for China to shoulder responsibilities (担负

[156] Interview, 22 July 2016, Beijing
[157] Interview, 25 July 2016, Beijing

责任) to tackle climate change.

At the macro-level understanding of diplomatic style, China wants to play a bigger part in strengthening its capabilities in tackling climate change. This 'shoulder responsibility' desire has increased over time, influenced by China's growing diplomatic presence in international affairs, and also due to the fact that China is the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions with rising climate-related environmental problems in China. As early as the early 2000s, China's 'adherence to international obligations has become more pronounced […] as international environmental diplomacy has accelerated and as China's own capacity to participate has increased' (Ross, 1998). Post-Copenhagen climate change diplomacy of China showed a 'more flexible stance', and China realised that climate action is related to China's 'national reputation and credibility'; since the 2011 Durban climate conference COP 17, China expressed for the first time its 'willingness to accept legally binding obligations by 2030' that 'matched China's economic development and capabilities' (Li, 2016). Since 2013, China's diplomatic style in climate change is more aligned with China's ambitions to 'play a more central role in the international arena while having to take on its international responsibilities', China's climate change diplomatic style is more confident and open (Li, 2016). This shouldering climate responsibility diplomatic style is evident in China's diplomatic efforts in enhancing climate change engagement with the EU and the wider international community. China's efforts in shouldering climate action has enabled China to evolve from being a 'follower' to an important 'influencer' in global climate governance.[158]

For China, there is the domestic imperative to shoulder global climate change

[158] Interview, Brussels, 10 August 2018

responsibility which is linked with the salience of climate change issues in China's domestic development. This is because 'at the heart of China's responsibility is to fulfil its domestic responsibilities' (Su, 2008). From China's perspective, climate change mitigation is relevant to China's domestic development, and is becoming politically more salient. The increasing link between 'China's domestic environmental problems and international climate governance' propelled China to incorporate addressing climate change into China's national sustainable development strategy (Li, 2016). This 'shoulder responsibility' diplomatic style in climate change is anchored in holding responsibility for the everyday life of the Chinese people, including ensuring clean air and fresh water.[159] The National Plan launched in June 2007 by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) was China's first global warming policy initiative, which established concrete principles to address climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.

There is also the international imperative for China to take up more climate action. Over the years, concerted international efforts in combatting climate change have incentivised China to strengthen climate action, as China has come to realise that environmental issues that could once be ignored, now may 'carry strategic significance and become vital for a nation's existence and development' (Chen, c2009). Participating in the 'international environmental cooperation is conducive to the elevation of China's image and soft power in the long run' (Chen, 2009). China's growing involvement in international climate cooperation has also encouraged China to strengthen its efforts domestically to tackle environmental issues. Throughout the different stages of China's climate change cooperation with the EU, China has shown an increasing desire to shoulder responsibility by increasing its climate ambition, and sharing global efforts in fighting climate change.

[159] Interview, 2 March 2018, Brussels

This is manifest in China learning from EU best practices in developing China's emissions trading system.[160]

The Chinese 'shouldering responsibility' style of climate change diplomacy is a potent idea underpinning China's negotiation stance in international climate governance. China's stance in international climate negotiations exhibits proactive and reactive features. Since 2009, China has been 'more proactive' in international climate negotiations, as well as in its efforts to tackle air pollution with increasing sign of the 'domestication of climate change'.[161] China's increasingly more proactive role in tackling climate change reflects its aspirations for global leadership, and also stems from the 'driving force from developed countries to ensure that China takes up more climate action'.[162] China's relatively reactive stance that is evident in its gradually accepting its GHG mitigation obligations can be attributed to China's dependence on developed countries' climate mitigation-related technology transfers and financial assistance (Wu, 2016).

The domestic and international imperatives for China to shoulder climate responsibility are both pressure for China and an incentive for China-EU climate change cooperation (对中国-欧盟气候合作是动力也是压力).[163] China's unique climate change diplomacy is underpinned by China's dual status of 'a developing country' and 'an aspiring responsible great power' (负责任大国) in international affairs.[164] The impact of China's diplomatic style in the process of EU-China ETS cooperation is manifest in China's delicate balancing act of raising its climate ambition in climate diplomacy and actively enhancing technical

[160] Interview, 19 March 2019, Brussels
[161] Interview, 7 August 2018
[162] Interview, 7 August 2018
[163] Interview, 25 March 2019, Brussels
[164] Interview, 2 March 2018, Brussels

cooperation with the EU. China's willingness to shoulder growing responsibility in climate diplomacy is due to China's status of being the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, while also being the largest developing country with a permanent seat at the UN Security Council. As a 'responsible developing country', China will take on 'international commitments that match its national circumstances, current development stage and actual capabilities by enhancing mitigation and adaptation actions and further strengthening south-south cooperation on climate change'.[165]

China's role in promoting international cooperation on climate change is anchored in its aspiring responsible power role. China has been 'called upon' to actively shoulder the responsibility to tackle climate change and to exert itself as a 'great power' in the field was brought to the fore when the US administration announced their potential exit from the Paris Agreement'.[166] Global climate governance is a 'very specific mix of power politics, economic interests and normative environments' (Belis, Joffe, Kerremans and Qi, 2015), in actively engaging in climate governance, China has emerged as a 'constructive shaper' in lieu of a 'passive follower' of the global order (Li, Wolters and Yang 2017). China's climate change diplomatic style is underpinned by China's 'long-term vision of its role in global governance' (Li, Wolters and Yang 2017).

China's climate change diplomatic style is partly conditioned by China being a developing country.[167] China's efforts for 'reducing emissions-intensive production and the emission-reducing innovations and the transformation from fossil fuels to renewable

[165] China's NDC submission to the UNFCCC, http://www4.unfccc.int/ndcregistry/PublishedDocuments/China%20First/China%27s%20First%20NDC%20Submission.pdf
[166] Interview, Brussels, 21 April 2017
[167] Interview, Beijing. 16 July 2016

energies fits in China's policy of emphasising the role of innovation dynamics for economic growth and acts as new incentives in the field of climate policy' (Welfens, Yu, Hanrahan and Geng, 2017, p.518). Key climate change policies in China are substantiated in China's Five-Year Plans. China's strategies to tackle climate change and its environmental policies is encapsulated in China's 12th and 13th Five-Year Plans and 'Chinese National Plan on Climate Change'. In essence, these climate-related strategies aim to decrease emissions by setting reduction targets in China's seven pilot ETS, and to foster a clear path towards green development.

China's 'developing country' style in climate diplomacy is closely related to the need to strengthen technological development and capacity building. China is transitioning to a greener mode of development in need of technology and expertise, China's climate diplomacy is 'increasing international cooperation for mutual benefit on the principle of equality, mutual benefit and win-win is one of the basic themes of China's strategy' (News Office of the State Council of China, Energy Whitepaper 2007). The EU-China technical cooperation contributed to the design and implementation of China's national ETS. Although the project is 'a technical assistance project to provide capacity building in the design and operation of [China's] future national ETS, the project team works on a regular basis with those in charge of designing [China's] National ETS policy and those that will be implementing it and rolling it out'.[168] China's national ETS is considered the 'single most important policy tool in China to reduce GHG emissions to allow the country to go through a necessary industrial and economic reform and also to meeting emissions reduction targets'.[169]

[168] Interview, ibid.
[169] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project PSC Meeting, 22 March 2016

6.5.3 Diplomatic styles and EU-China shared intentions in EU-China climate change diplomacy

Per proposition three of the model of diplomatic relationship-building, consonance between the EU and China's climate change diplomatic styles may foster stronger EU-China shared intentions expressed in the form of 'sharing climate ambition' in EU-China climate change cooperation. At the macro-level, both the EU and China are transitioning to low-carbon economies and advancing domestic climate action. The EU and China have 'the common goal in addressing global environmental issues' and are both 'willing to strengthen communication, consultation and coordination in this regard'.[170] Emissions trading systems cooperation is a 'response policy' for both the EU and China to not only tackle climate change but also to narrow and eventually eliminate the discrepancies between their political commitments to reducing CO_2 and their concrete climate action.[171] For both the EU and China, carbon pricing, in the form of emissions trading system is the 'key step' in achieving their climate goals enshrined in the Paris Agreement.[172]

In this sense, the EU and China's climate diplomacies is 'becoming increasingly similar'.[173] Both the EU and China 'recognise the need to strengthen cooperation on climate change' and are committed to making 'significant cuts in greenhouse gas emissions through credible and verifiable domestic action'.[174] The EU and China 'share similar visions' in terms of tackling climate change, and a joint desire to honour the Paris

[170] Minutes of the meeting between Commissioner for Environment, European Commission and Minister, State Environmental Protection Administration, China, 14 June 2005, Brussels.
[171] Interview, 15 June 2018, Brussels
[172] EU-China Summit Joint Statement, Brussels, 9 April 2019, available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/39020/euchina-joint-statement-9april2019.pdf
[173] Interview, 8 June 2016, Brussels
[174] Joint statement: Deepening the EU-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for mutual benefit, Brussels, 31 March 2014

Agreement.[175] Their similar approaches to raising climate ambition contributed to the successful implementation of the EU-China ETS cooperation and to building a relationship that can more effectively and efficiently address complex issues in climate change.

An ambitious 'leadership' aspiration underpins both the EU's 'walk-the-talk' diplomatic style and China's 'shoulder responsibility' diplomatic styles in climate change. Similarities in EU and Chinese diplomatic styles enhanced the development of EU-China shared intentions which led to clearer joint decarbonisation action. The EU-China summit in July 2018 saw the EU and China reach a new level of commitment to 'working together for a more sustainable planet', the EU stated that 'We [the EU and China] have underlined our joint, strong determination to fight climate change and demonstrate global leadership. It shows our commitment to multilateralism and recognises that climate change is a global challenge affecting all countries on earth. There is no time for us to sit back and watch passively. Now is the time for decisive action'.[176] Both the EU and China acknowledge the urgency of addressing climate change and the importance of enhancing their cooperation. This 'basic strategic alignment' (Gippner, 2016) between China and the EU policies in mitigating climate change have increased avenues for bilateral cooperation and cooperation in international settings, contributing to sustaining political momentum in climate change talks. This was reflected in the most recent EU-China summit in April 2019 where the EU and China reinforced their 'strong commitment to implement the Paris Agreement and the Montreal Protocol', and to urgently 'take domestic and international action to effectively provide a global response to the threat of climate change, to further

[175] Interview, 8 June 2016, Brussels
[176] European Commission, EU-China summit: deepening the strategic global partnership, Press release IP/18/4251, Beijing, 16 July 2018

intensify their cooperation'.[177] With increasingly shared ambition in addressing climate change, the development of EU-China cooperation in emissions trading systems and the broader EU-China climate cooperation have become 'more pragmatic and market-driven'.[178]

The convergence in the EU and China's climate strategies and the deepening of EU-China climate cooperation have generated their closer positions in international climate change negotiations, which are characterised by the 'the size of [their] common ambition',[179] and the EU and China's resolve in 'assuming greater leadership on the global environmental challenges'.[180] Strong shared intentions manifested in the EU and China's resolve of 'assuming greater leadership on the global environmental agenda'.[181] Both sides believe that the EU-China 'bilateral cooperation can maximize the effectiveness of domestic policies designed as responses to global challenges', and 'by working together we [the EU and China] can set a positive example for others.'[182] The EU's ETS is currently the biggest in the world, and China's national ETS once in full operation will be bigger than the EU's; these two biggest ETS cooperation has implications for the global climate governance. It shows that 'only together we [the EU and China] can better respond to these challenges and we can take the lead globally'.[183] The EU is interested in China's ETS development and China is interested in the EU's decarbonisation policies bearing fruit,

[177] EU-China Summit Joint Statement, Brussels, 9 April 2019, available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/39020/euchina-joint-statement-9april2019.pdf
[178] Interview, Katowice, December 2018
[179] Speech by Commissioner Vella: 7th EU-China Ministerial Dialogue on Environment Policy, 1 April 2019, Beijing, China
[180] EU-China Summit Joint Statement, Brussels, 9 April 2019, available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/39020/euchina-joint-statement-9april2019.pdf
[181] ibid.
[182] Speech by Commissioner Vella: 7th EU-China Ministerial Dialogue on Environment Policy, 1 April 2019, Beijing, China
[183] 'EU and China step up their cooperation on environment, water and circular economy', Press release, 1 April 2019, European Commission, Brussels

these compatible diplomatic visions rendered the progression of the ETS cooperation void of major challenges (没有大的挑战，平稳进展).[184] This 'EU-China leadership style' was especially 'visible' in the preparations for COP 21, the EU and China's engagement in climate governance has never been more vital in the pre and post-Paris negotiations.[185]

The strengthening of EU-China shared intentions in EU-China ETS cooperation is a process generated from the increasingly robust commitment from both the EU and China to contribute to emissions reduction through the UNFCCC negotiations, and through their enhanced bilateral cooperation. In many way, the ETS cooperation between the EU and China was a process of 'confidence building and the EU-China ETS has strongly enhanced EU-China relations. The intensity of collaboration was not foreseen by both sides'.[186] China's strategy in decarbonising its carbon-intensive economy coincided with the EU's commitment to green growth and sustainable development. Tackling climate change presents a 'common challenge' and an 'opportunity' (危机) for both China and the EU.[187] China's 'shoulder responsibility' climate change diplomatic style complies with the EU's 'walk the talk' climate change diplomatic style in sharing climate ambition.

However, subtle differences in the EU and China's diplomatic strategies in climate change presented challenges to the strengthening of shared intentions in the process of the ETS cooperation. The EU and China's experiences in developing carbon markets are very different. China and the EU's emissions trading systems have 'their own characteristics', and that China's ETS should 'reflect China's characteristics and consider China's situation'

[184] Interview, 20 July 2016, Beijing
[185] Interview, 18 October 2018, Paris
[186] Interview, 2 December 2016, Brussels
[187] Interview, 5 July 2017, Beijing

(国情).[188] As one official noted 'the EU is very important in terms of providing technical suggestions to China, but we [China] always has to adapt to suit Chinese circumstances'.[189] Through the cooperation with China, the EU is also gaining experience and slowly improving its own ETS.[190] The progression of the EU-China ETS cooperation can be seen as a delicate act of balancing different diplomatic styles and developing shared decarbonisation objectives. The differences in the EU's ETS and China's ETS presented challenges to enhancing the development of EU-China shared climate ambition, and the strengthening of EU-China climate change relations.

Despite the fact that the 'green agenda is becoming more important in the EU-China partnership', the EU and China's decarbonisation philosophy is different.[191] The differences are embedded in the different political and economic contexts, and institutional settings of China and the EU. China's climate change diplomatic style and it balancing being a developing country and an aspiring 'responsible great power' determines the extent of responsibility that China wishes and can shoulder; compared to the EU, China is also a relative latecomer in global governance in general, and in global climate governance in particular, which affects the choices in China's climate negotiations.[192] The bottom-up approach characterised by informal consultation that the EU is experienced in is not 'in the nature of developing countries, such as China'.[193] Albeit the differences, China values the 'EU's way of tackling climate change and selects good practices to incorporate into its reform agenda. China's climate change diplomacy vis-à-vis the EU serves its domestic

[188] Minutes of EU-China ETS Project, 20 May 2014
[189] Interview, 22 July 2016, Beijing
[190] Interview, 20 March 2018, Beijing
[191] Interview, 2 June 2016, Brussels
[192] Interview, 22 March 2018, Brussels
[193] Interview, 18 July 2018, Paris

development and core economic reform'.[194]

Moreover, as suggested in the model of diplomatic relationship-building, diplomatic styles are culturally conditioned at the micro-level. Differences between the styles of negotiation and communication may impede the EU and China engineering their shared intentions in relationship-building. The marked contrast between European and Chinese negotiation styles affects communication, mutual understanding and the sense of 'we-feeling' in the relationship-building process. This 'we-feeling' or 'esprit d'équipe' (a team spirit) drives day to day ad hoc collaborations and bilateral rapprochement ('le sens de rapprochements') (Devin, 2013). Diplomats generate a usual disposition in interactions, and 'diplomats are constantly entwined in dialogical reflection on not only the 'foreign other' but also the 'national self' (Wiseman, 2010, p.230). In this sense, stylistic consonance in terms of the micro-level negotiation styles helps minimise unnecessary miscomprehension and mitigate disagreements while generating mutuality that enhance diplomatic encounters.

The EU demonstrated a general disposition to a 'low-context' negotiation style, while China exhibited a 'high-context' negotiation style. Although there is no universal style of negotiation, 'low context' style is characterised by mostly explicit and direct style of communication; 'high context' style is associated with more implicit or indirect communication. Subtle differences between negotiation styles influence information sharing in negotiation process as uncovering possible shared priorities requires both sides to actively share information (Brett, 2000). While China may have a tendency to share information more indirectly, the EU's negotiation style may predispose negotiators to share information more directly. The way in which information is conveyed and transmitted

[194] Interview, 3 June 2016, Brussels

differently in the Chinese and European contexts affects EU-China climate change negotiations.

Senior climate negotiators acknowledged this dissonance between the EU's style and China's style of negotiation with much candid reflection. There are differences of working styles (中欧合作方式不同之处) between the EU and China that at times may impact the progression of EU-China climate change cooperation, similar negotiation styles facilitate cooperation (工作方式越统一, 越一致, 越有利于合作).[195] Regular meetings between the EU and China can bridge these gaps, frequent talks are important for 'personal relationship-building' between negotiators. The margins of official meetings are also important for parties to 'exchange ideas' and 'learn from each other' in a more informal manner which is vital to sustaining good communication and to further trust-building in bilateral EU-China climate cooperation.[196] The different micro-aspect of diplomatic styles may complicate the process of finding cooperative solutions, but brings to the fore the role of diplomacy in EU-China climate change cooperation which is to 'grow the EU-China relationship and manage differences between both sides'.[197]

Through retracing the development of EU-China ETS cooperation, the micro-level differences of diplomatic styles were eclipsed by the strong similarities of EU-China diplomatic styles at the macro level. The relative shrinking importance of micro-level negotiations styles in climate change negotiations is a consequence of the growing appreciation of the urgency and imperative for the international community to jointly

[195] Interview, 5 July 2017, Beijing
[196] Interview, 7 December 2016, Brussels
[197] Interview, 3 June 2016, Brussels

tackle climate change.[198] As an EU chief climate change negotiator reflected, China is an 'equal partner for the EU in tackling climate change, it is a major economy with huge potential. We [the EU and China] have established a friendly working relationship and not just political or technical cooperation in the field of climate change which benefits the EU and China's joint aspirations of being responsible international actors in global environment protection'.[199] With the 'successful cooperation on issues like emissions trading and clean technologies are bearing fruit', the EU and China believe that 'now is the time to further strengthen these ties to keep the wheels turning for ambitious global climate action. In these turbulent times, shared climate leadership is needed more than ever.'[200]

The stylistic differences in negotiation styles is 'neither a trivial nor a negligible phenomenon. It is worthy of attention' (Cohen, 2007). The encounter of the EU and China's diplomatic styles in climate change accentuated the transformative effects of EU-China shared intentions, in the form of shared climate vision and ambition, which were necessary to enable the EU and China to overcome negotiation gridlock and foster closer climate change cooperation. In essence, the encounter of EU and Chinese climate change diplomatic styles was embedded in the process of developing EU-China shared climate ambition that influenced the building of EU-China climate change relations.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the making of EU-China climate change relations through the 'flagship' EU-China bilateral cooperation on climate change – the EU-China Emission

[198] Interview, EU and Chinese negotiators.
[199] Interview, 8 June 2018, Brussels
[200] European Commission, Commissioner Arias Cañete in China to strengthen climate and clean energy ties, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/news/commissioner-arias-ca%C3%B1ete-china-strengthen-climate-and-clean-energy-ties

Trading System Project. The theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building that this chapter is guided by, sheds new light on the dynamism of EU-China climate change relations. More than uncovering the institutional actors, mechanisms and processes interwoven in the fabric of EU-China climate change relations, the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building unearthed and demonstrated the fundamental catalyst of Sino-European climate change diplomacy – the increasing shared climate ambition that undergirds the joint efforts of deeper EU-China cooperation on climate change. In lieu of mercurial interests or intangible values, shared intentions became the binding force of EU-China climate change relations, as captured by the development of EU-China shared climate ambition in the process of EU-China climate change relationship-building. The shared climate ambition was the catalyst for the development of EU-China climate change relations. The process of developing this relationship of shared climate ambition was a process of the EU and China acting in concert to tackle climate change, strengthen bilateral cooperation on emissions trading which was constitutively influenced by the interplay of structural coordination among a plethora of institutional actors and mechanisms, the negotiation of complex political and technical substance, and the dialogue of EU and Chinese diplomatic styles in the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building.

The institutional structure is the foundation of EU-China climate relations and exhibits a complex network-structure. The institutional structure engages the plethora of European and Chinese institutional actors competent for climate change policy-making and a wide range of stakeholders. The complexity of the institutional dynamics in EU-China climate change diplomacy generated challenges for the coordination of different priorities in the collaboration process. Shared intentions were strengthened through a balanced coordination between and within the central and peripheral institutional actors connected

via strong institutional ties. The alignment of climate change priorities between the EU and China in the development of EU-China ETS cooperation would not have been possible without the increasingly institutionalised diplomatic structure which enabled policy coordination across the EU and China. Weak coordination, as in the form of too less or too formal diplomatic interactions within and between the central and peripheral institutions actors rendered rigid communication that did not facilitate EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. Frequent interactions and dialogues that contributed to a balanced policy coordination in the EU-China climate change network enhanced EU-China shared intentions, in the form of the EU and China raising climate ambition, and created new opportunities for emissions trading systems cooperation, which enhanced EU-China joint action on climate change.

The development of EU-China cooperation on emission trading systems is closely intertwined with the alignment of political and technical priorities between the EU and China, and shaped by the adoption of increasingly ambitious climate-change policies of the EU and China. Over the decade-long process, the EU and China have intensified their climate change cooperation, they have issued three joint communiqués and elevated the traditionally technical-level bilateral cooperation on emissions trading to ministerial level cooperation. Shared confidence and climate ambition were enhanced during the cooperation process. Although complex substance of climate change prolonged the process of diplomatic relationship-building, strengthening EU-China shared intentions required the alignment of technical and political substance. Technical talks informed the political negotiations and often propelled the decision makers to take more determined action. Shared intentions were particularly potent in EU-China climate cooperation due to the nature and complexity of climate change issues discussed between the EU and China. The

alignment of political and technical substance in diplomatic interactions generated a renewed EU-China shared climate ambition which was strengthened through the process. Robust shared intention to address climate change enabled the EU and China to discover more possible pathways and common positions on complex issues in climate change.

The encounter of EU and Chinese diplomatic styles provided both challenges and opportunities for the EU and China to strengthen EU-China shared intentions in building their climate change relationship. Consonance of China and the EU's climate diplomatic strategies strengthened the joint political will of the EU and China to effectively tackle climate change. Both the EU and China share the global responsibility to reduce GHG emissions, and both adopted the market-based approach of emissions trading to reduce GHG. The similarities in their strategies enhanced alignment of political and technical priorities between the EU and China, epitomised by the new and larger-scale follow-up emissions trading cooperation project, and the launch of China's national emissions trading system in 2017. These concrete 'deliverables' were the result of not a tit-for-tat exchange of material interests, nor a agglomeration of values; instead, it was through the process of developing EU-China shared intentions manifest as the EU and China sharing climate ambition and strong political will, that facilitated the process of EU-China climate change cooperation.

Through the decade-long climate change cooperation, the EU and China have come to share strong affinities in the global climate regime. The similarities in diplomatic styles enabled the EU and China to refashion their climate change diplomatic strategies, and to pursue strengthened collective climate action. The EU's 'walk the talk' diplomatic style in climate change was in consonance with China's 'shoulder responsibility' diplomatic style.

However, at the micro-level understanding of diplomatic styles, the differences in communication and negotiation styles underscored the necessity of the EU and China to accommodate and respect each other's ways of working, and to engage more frequently to build mutual understanding and trust. In light of the leadership aspiration that both the EU and China share in climate diplomacy, China's intention of 'learning by doing' was in consonance with the EU's 'willingness to share' best practices and knowledge. Differences in diplomatic styles at the micro-level were eclipsed by the macro-level consonance of the EU and China's climate change diplomatic strategies, as much as by the shared intentions that were brought to the fore by the increasing institutionalisation of EU-China relations.

The case of EU-China emissions trading cooperation epitomises the importance of the EU-China shared intentions being translated into concrete successful diplomatic cooperation. EU-China shared intentions have a direct impact on the vitality of EU-China climate cooperation. EU-China shared intentions convey a certain 'we feeling' that emphasises the possibilities to work together and to create strategies in complex climate change negotiations. The enhancement of EU-China shared intentions in the process of EU-China climate change relationship-building raises the propensity to cooperate. The successful implementation of the EU-China ETS cooperation provides further incentives for intensifying EU-China climate change cooperation. Harnessing the foundational elements of structural coordination, seeking alignment of priorities, adapting to each other's styles of working, and cultivating shared climate ambition, EU-China relations will be able to grow and develop as much if not even more than they have come to develop so far.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Epilogue

One classic question has captured and perplexed scholars of international diplomacy from the very beginning: 'what makes this world hang together?'[1] This thesis has been animated by an analogous question concerning two of the most important players of international politics – what makes the EU and China hang together? Endeavoring to elucidate this enigma, the study has introduced a novel theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building to the field of diplomatic studies, and explored the making of EU-China relations through the prism of two diplomatic case studies, as exemplified through the EU-China negotiations of the landmark bilateral agreement – the *Agreement on Cooperation on, and Protection of, Geographical Indications* (2009-2019) and the flagship EU-China climate-related bilateral cooperation initiative – the EU-China Emission Trading System Project (2010-2019). The study purports that the making of EU-China relations is made possible and shaped by three essential elements – structure, substance and style – of diplomatic relationship-building, the constitutive dynamic of the three elements influence diplomatic relationship-building through EU-China shared intentions which are the fundamental underpinning of EU-China relations. In essence, the making of EU-China relations is a process influenced by structural coordination, negotiations of technical and political substance, and the encounter between the EU's 'walk the talk' diplomatic style and China's 'shoulder responsibility' diplomatic style. It is

[1] See for example, Ruggie, John Gerard, 'What makes the world hang together? Neo-utilitarianism and the social constructivist challenge', in *International Organization*, vol.52, issue. 4, autumn 1998, pp.855-885.

in parallel a process of the development of EU-China shared intentions. As it is through EU-China shared intentions that the three essential elements are transformed to influence the making of EU-China relations; shared intentions endow the EU and China with a 'we-feeling' that invokes shared vision and conveys the potential to unite the two parties in diplomatic relationship-building. The study contributes to the field of diplomatic studies by providing a new theoretical arsenal to theorise diplomatic relationship-building in a way that captures not only the 'relational' nature of diplomatic relationship-building but also integrates the deeper, social and human layer of 'intentions' in understanding relationship-building in international diplomacy.

In so doing, the thesis illuminated the aspects of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building that traditional international relations scholarship has not yet been able to dispel. This study therefore transcends traditional research in International Relations and has broader implications for exploring means by which the EU-China relationship can be more effectively managed. The remainder of this concluding chapter summaries the novel contribution this thesis brings to EU-China relations and diplomatic studies. It first synthesises the powerful analytic value of the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building developed in this thesis. The second part of the chapter compares the making of EU-China relations in the two case studies, it analyses the similarities and differences of the constitutive influence of the three essential elements on EU-China shared intentions in the dynamism of EU-China agricultural-trade and climate change relations. The final section draws inspiration from the central findings of the thesis to present three tentative policy suggestions for enhancing EU-China relations.

7.2 The value of diplomatic relationship-building theory

As explicated in chapters two and three of the thesis, the enigma of EU-China relations is compounded with the 'relational gap' in diplomatic studies. The traditional renderings of EU-China relations are contestable and incomplete to the extent that scholars have explicitly or implicitly employed the binary interest-based and value-based logics in International Relations to explain decision-making in international diplomacy. These interpretations of EU-China relations are either premised on economic necessity or on political choice. The primacy of brute material interests and ideational factors of values have taken centre stage. The intentions that can be found emanating from the more human and social layer of relationship-building have largely been left in the dark.

In these traditional renderings of the making of EU-China relations, diplomatic relationship-building has been conceived along a 'hard core interests' and 'soft intangible values' continuum with interests and values dominating the two ends of the spectrum. Existing approaches have made unpersuasive justification as to the ebb and flow of diplomatic relationship-building in the absence of a convenience of shared interests and congruence of shared values. The ontological constraint of the existing studies has failed to explicate the evolving nature of decision-making in international diplomacy, as relationships evolve on the spectrum of interests and values. The weakness in the current scholarship invites the question as to how the EU and China translate their interests, values and diplomatic objectives into working together. The problem with existing interpretations is their focus on discrete facets of EU-China relations; only fragments of the nuanced and sophisticated processes through which the EU and China work together make cameo appearances. The conventional undertakings have failed to fully capture the complex process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. Moreover, across the vast spectrum

of EU-China relations, the degree of cooperation and depth of engagement vary significantly in terms of policy areas. But the traditional 'interests-versus-values' models entrenched in the major paradigms of International Relations have failed to explain how the process of diplomatic relationship-building differs across different issue areas in terms of different interlocutors, diplomatic objectives and negotiation styles. This 'relational gap' in the scholarly literature necessitates an alternative vantage point, an integrated model to examine the multifaceted aspects of diplomatic relationship-building. The thesis has sought to bring these elements to light by advancing a novel theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building. The theoretical model promises new insights on EU-China relations in ways that are not available to conventional IR undertakings.

At the core of the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building is the constitutive logic that three essential elements of diplomatic relationship-building constitutively influence EU-China diplomatic relationship-building, reflected in the fundamental underpinning of relationship-building that is EU-China shared intentions. Chapter three generated three propositions about the possible influence of the three essential elements of diplomatic relationship-building on the development of EU-China shared intentions in the process of EU-China relationship-building. The theoretical model brings to the fore the 'intentional' factor that was invisible from the existing theoretical approaches, encapsulated in EU-China shared intentions underpinning EU-China relations. The idea of shared intentions offers a different lens for understanding the dialogues, diplomatic practices and processes unfolding in diplomatic relationship-building. Shared intentions are the foundation of all social life. No realm of human activity is imaginable without them, including international politics, and intentional international cooperation in particular. An emphasis on this 'intentional' element in international diplomacy takes us beyond the

binary understanding of interests and values as sole motives in fostering international diplomacy.

To facilitate the application of the theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building in the empirical investigation of EU-China relations, the study established an associated research methodology. The first of its kind in the scholarly field of diplomatic studies, chapter five formulated a methodology that could capture and evaluate the process of diplomatic relationship-building. The study borrows the conceptual tools from social network analysis and complemented by ustilising qualitative techniques of discourse analysis to navigate a three-step process of capturing and analysing the making of EU-China relations. The theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building advanced in this thesis and the associated social network-based analytical research methodology enabled us to uncover the three unique combination of factors brought to bear in the complex processes of EU-China relations, thus permitting a more nuanced and sophisticated perspective on EU-China relations than that offered through traditional international relations theoretical lenses.

In so doing, the thesis contributes to the endeavour of 'bringing theory to bear on diplomacy and, reciprocally, bringing diplomacy back into the study of world politics' (Sending, Pouliot and Neumann, 2015). As explained in chapter three, 'the resistance to theory' that diplomacy studies has exhibited is most manifest in the underlying theoretical impediment that there lack a systematic theoretical model that integrates the various dimensions of diplomatic relationship-building to help interpret the dynamism of diplomatic relationship-building and the human, social and cultural milieu in which diplomatic relationship-building is embedded. The model of diplomatic

relationship-building integrates the discrete factors of institutional structure, negotiation substance and diplomatic style that have either been largely neglected or have remained in separate silos of the discussions in IR literature therefore enriching our intellectual repertoire. It invites us to engage in EU-China relations on more imaginative terms, to stimulate new understandings of EU-China relations and to grasp a more comprehensive comprehension of the dynamics and the fundamental underpinnings of EU-China relations.

7.3 The making and remaking of EU-China relations

The two in-depth case studies detailed in chapters five and six substantiated the argument about the making of EU-China relations and demonstrated the analytical power of the model of diplomatic relationship-building by shedding new insights as to how the EU and China came into being. The model helped account for the factors facilitating and delaying, if not obstructing EU-China relationship-building. The rich empirical studies unveiled the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building as a special process of developing EU-China shared intentions that takes place under the constitutive influence of the dynamics of institutional structure, negotiation substance and the interaction of EU and Chinese diplomatic styles. It was the combination of structural coordination, negotiations of complex political and technical issues, and the influence of the EU and China's diplomatic styles that accounted for the development of the EU-China agricultural-trade negotiations and EU-China climate change cooperation. While the constitutive influence of structure, substance and style formed the important conditioning factors in diplomatic relationship-building, EU-China shared intentions were the fundamental underpinning of the diplomatic relationship-building processes in both case studies.

The constitutive influence of the three essential elements crystallised in influencing the *sine qua non* of diplomatic relationship-building – EU-China shared intentions which acted as a catalyst for enhancing diplomatic relationship-building. As such, the ebb and flow of EU-China relations is a making of a particular kind of relationship-building that is anchored in the shared intentions between the EU and China. As the empirical investigation has shown, in lieu of the convenience of shared interests or the congruence of shared values, or indeed when brute interests and intangible values became problematic in diplomatic relationship-building process, there exists an alternative yet more fundamental factor and motive of relationship-building manifest as shared intentions. This collective form of intentions shared between the EU and China convey a certain 'we feeling' and is oriented toward a specific joint diplomatic objective. Shared intentions thus hold the promise to create alternative diplomatic possibilities germane to the development of EU-China relations. In many ways, the process of building EU-China relations is a process of cultivating EU-China shared intentions. In both cases, shared intentions were crucial for enhancing EU-China relations, the strengthening of EU-China shared intentions contributed to the negotiation of the EU-China landmark bilateral Agreement on GIs, and the completion, and expansion of the EU-China emissions trading systems project.

Each case study offered an in-depth analysis of the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. In the absence of shared interests and values, or at times in spite of them, the EU-China shared intentions expressed as the fundamental underpinning of diplomatic relationship-building with the potential to enhance EU-China relations. As regards the element of structure in diplomatic relationship-building, shared intentions altered the course of negotiations by harnessing the concerted efforts in the form of institutional coordination, injecting strengthened shared intentions into diplomatic

interactions. In terms of the element of substance, shared intentions endowed the EU and China with pathways and renewed mutual understanding to find convergence in complex negotiation agendas. Apropos the element of diplomatic style, shared intentions generated concerted diplomatic efforts and will, created possibilities for the EU and China to strategically overcome differences in diplomatic styles that may have curtailed the EU and China to achieve desired relationship-building outcomes. In essence, EU-China shared intentions refashion the possible and the probable in EU-China relations

The two distinct cases were chosen to represent the broad spectrum of EU-China relations. They also aimed to speak to the debate surrounding the extent of convergence and contestation between the EU and China about important global issues. Negotiations on trade and climate change display important similarities and differences. A comparative analysis of EU-China relationship-building in agricultural-trade and climate change broadened our perspectives on the pitfalls and possibilities of diplomatic relationship-building. The cross-case comparison offered in this thesis leveraged the potential variance between the three essential elements of diplomatic relationship-building to provide additional insights on the differences and similarities in the diplomatic making of EU-China agricultural-trade and climate change relations.

7.3.1 The similarities

In both cases, a wide net was cast to identify the plethora of institutional actors populating the structural configuration of EU-China relations. Of particular importance is the institutional structure as the bedrock of EU-China relations. In both cases, the institutional structure in which EU-China diplomatic relationship-building takes place exhibits a network-like structure and is highly complex in character. The institutional

network-structure for EU-China diplomatic relationship-building is comprised of two configurations. At the core of the structure is a 'centrality' comprised of the most consequential institutional actors serving as the nucleus in EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. Moreover, as the two case studies illustrate, a complex constellation of institutional actors populates a 'periphery' of the EU-China diplomatic network, and contributes to diplomatic relationship-building through extensive coordination and consultation. During the decade-long EU-China agricultural-trade negotiations and climate change cooperation, the centrality was consolidated, the periphery widened with a growing number of institutional actors incorporated into the relationship-building process, which is a testament to an increasingly diversified institutionalisation of EU-China relations.

The complex decision-making process was characterised by extensive coordination within and between the 'centrality' and 'periphery' of the EU-China network. The EU have more dialogues with China than ever before. The growing scale of EU-China diplomatic interactions over the past decade attests to the increasingly mature and robust institutionalised structure, and the strength of the intentional cooperation between the EU and China. The dialogues range from low-level technical exchanges to highest level of summits, and have expanded in intensity. Lower-level negotiations often were a prelude to negotiation breakthroughs, such as the case of informal talks preluding the formal negotiation rounds in the EU-China GIs negotiations in recent years. High-level interactions were crucial in developing the political momentum so important for the progress of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. Summit diplomacy was particularly important in terms of providing strategic guidance to EU-China relations. In both case studies, the visit of the Chinese top leadership to the EU's three major institutions celebrating the 40th anniversary of EU-China diplomatic relations was a major

milestone in the process. The 40th anniversary of EU-China relations with its symbolic EU-China summit had significant importance, serving as a 'breakthrough summit' in both the negotiations on geographical indications and cooperation on climate change. This EU-China summit in 2015 altered the course of the relationship. Indeed, as both cases illustrate, summitry diplomacy still retained its primacy in strengthening EU-China relations, as summits were often symbolic events for advancing negotiation agendas and provided an incentive for building momentum, often leading to a strengthening of EU-China shared intentions, prompting at times 'the trickiest summit' during challenging times or the 'best summit we've ever had' when negotiations broke stalemate.

In both cases, the dynamic institutionalisation of EU-China relations presented challenges of coordination and communication in the process of building EU-China relations. The inefficiency of information and resource transfer could impair the process of diplomatic relationship-building. Diplomatic structure determines the joint capabilities of the EU and China to achieve the diplomatic objectives in relationship-building. A balanced coordination between and within the centrality and periphery of EU-China network facilitates the development of shared intentions and the relationship-building process between the EU and China. Structural coordination was critical to the process of diplomatic relationship-building between the EU and China, as it facilitated the transformation by which two different, at times even asymmetric institutional systems became a strong network of cooperation conveying a 'we-feeling'. Without strengthened institutional coordination, balanced formal and informal interactions, it is hard to perceive the EU and China achieving new shared intentions. Shared intentions can be strengthened in 'the right ambiance', or 'in the spirit of mutual understanding'. In particular face-to-face interactions provide unrivalled access to developing EU-China shared intentions. Balanced

institutional coordination enables the developing of shared intentions into a more positive direction for the process of diplomatic relationship-building.

The two case studies also showed similarities in terms of the substance negotiated in the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. The EU-China negotiations of the *Agreement on cooperation on, and protection of geographical indications* and the cooperation on emissions trading systems between the EU and China were centred on issues of high technical and political complexity. These complex negotiations test the strength of the EU-China relationship. The complexity of the issues impinged on the process of diplomatic relationship-building by way of delaying the negotiation process. But the alignment of political priorities and convergence of technical objectives enhanced the EU and China's commitment to reaching a 'win-win' agreement in the negotiations on GIs, and strengthened their shared climate ambition in EU-China cooperation on emissions trading system. The spill over effect of policy issues in EU-China relations was apparent, and the increasing linkage of issues on the spectrum of EU-China engagement impacted the way diplomatic negotiations were conducted. Shared intentions influenced the convergence of objectives, priorities and expectations of commitments to shared climate ambition in the EU-China emissions trading system cooperation detailed in chapter six. Shared intentions gave both sides the political will to translate EU-China shared intentions for reciprocity in trade ties into diplomatic rapprochement and gradual convergence of negotiation objectives in the EU-China negotiations on geographical indications detailed in chapter five. In both cases, shared intentions also elicited trust and 'we-ness' which were critical to establish integrity and authority of negotiators during the process of diplomatic relationship-building. The development of EU-China shared intentions offered potential for further cooperation and symbolised the joint commitment to intentional collaboration

in the EU-China relationship-building process.

In both cases, the process of making EU-China relations was also marked by the dialogue of EU and Chinese diplomatic styles. The consonance between the macro-level diplomatic styles found between the EU and China strengthened EU-China shared intentions and enhanced EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. At the macro-level, China exhibited a 'shoulder responsibility' diplomatic style in agricultural trade and climate change, that is related to the extent of responsibility China should and can shoulder in global governance. In light of China's greater international engagement, 'the kind of role and identity that China assumes is fundamental to China's diplomatic strategy' and 'the transformation of identity is reflected in China's formulation of policy and in its behaviour on the world stage' (Zhu, 2010). China's 'shoulder responsibility' diplomatic style is marked by the 'developing country' identity of China with a set of distinct national and social-economic characteristics. Most scholarly attempts to elucidate Chinese diplomacy has been centred on a dual focus concerning whether China is hegemonic or peaceful (Hao, Wei and Dittmer, 2009; Zheng, 2016). This study has shown that Chinese style of diplomacy is influenced by China finding the delicate balance between a developing country and an aspiring responsible great power. And that this responsibility should be in proportion to China's capabilities considering China's national situation. The case studies in the thesis have also revealed the common characteristics in the EU's diplomacy in the areas of agricultural trade and climate change, encapsulated in the EU's 'walk the talk' diplomatic style. The diplomatic style *à la européenne* manifested in the EU strengthening its domestic decarbonisation agenda while contributing to its 'leadership par exemple' way of commitment to tackling climate change in EU-China ETS cooperation, and commitment to a reciprocal and rules-based international trade order in the EU-China negotiations on GIs.

These distinct characteristics of EU and Chinese diplomacies were consolidated during the EU-China diplomatic relationship-building process.

7.3.2 The differences

The three elements of diplomatic relationship-building are the foundational building blocks of EU-China relations. The two cases have shown that each element, the institutional actors and mechanisms, the complex technical and political substance in negotiation and the unique characteristics of the EU and China's diplomacies, have exerted decisive impact on the development of EU-China relations. The extent to which the three essential elements differ in influencing the process of diplomatic relationship-building generate variations in the dynamics of EU-China shared intentions across the multifaceted EU-China relations. The variances of the three essential elements in the two cases and the impact of them in the process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building are worth clarifying.

The institutional structure that conditions the development of relationship-building between the EU and China differ in the two cases. The centrality of the institutional structure in EU-China climate change cooperation was more complex than the centrality found in EU-China agricultural-trade negotiations. The centrality of institutional actors around the negotiation table of EU-China ETS cooperation entailed two directorate-generals of the European Commission – DG CLIMA and DG ENER, and four major Chinese ministries competent for climate-related policy including the MEE, NDRC, NEA and MOF. The centrality of institutional actors around the negotiation table of EU-China negotiations on GIs include the European Commission's DG AGRI representing mainly the EU with two Chinese ministries of MOFCOM and MOA working in close

collaboration with SAIC and AQSIQ. As the locus of decision-making, the centrality differed mainly because institutional actors on the EU side have different competences in different policy areas. The EU has exclusive competence in trade policy, but the common agricultural policy and climate change policy are areas in which competence is shared between the EU and EU member states. The periphery of institutional actors in the EU-China climate change case is larger than that in the agricultural-trade case. The weight of academic and research institutions in EU-China climate change cooperation was more significant than the academic and research institutions in the EU-China agricultural-trade relations. Compared to EU-China agricultural-trade relations, the structure of EU-China climate change relations consisted of a more complex constellation of institutional actors and mechanisms due partly to the inter-sectoral nature of climate change.

The relationship between the central actors and the peripheral actors also differed in the two case studies. In the agricultural-trade negotiations, structural coordination was mainly of vertical coordination, entailing institutional actors mainly in the trade and agricultural spheres. Whereas in the case of climate change cooperation, it was essentially horizontal coordination across many policy areas, ranging from climate change, energy policy, finance and sustainable development. As the two case studies illustrate, the periphery of institutional actors in the diplomatic relationship-building process between the EU and China have grown in quality and quantity throughout the negotiation process. The encounters yielded progress in terms of the development of EU-China shared intentions. EU-China shared intentions developed during the higher levels of diplomatic interactions in the case of EU-China agricultural-trade negotiations, whereas EU-China shared intentions progressed steadily in the web of high-level and lower level ties contributing to EU-China climate change cooperation.

The substance negotiated in the two case studies played out in slightly different ways. Climate talks are in general more technical, and China has demonstrated firm interests in searching for technical assistance. Trade talks are more oriented around the principles and objectives both sides wish to gain. In the case of agricultural-trade negotiations, the EU and China sought ways to discover shared objectives and to build confidence and trust in each other. The negotiations of the '10+10 Pilot Project' exemplified the process of both sides seeking convergence in the mosaic substance of the negotiations. The successful negotiation of the 'Pilot Project in 2012 served to enhance EU-China shared intentions and strengthened the conviction shared by both sides to negotiate the more ambitious GIs Agreement. The Agreement would not have been achieved in the absence of EU-China shared intentions.

In contrast to EU-China agricultural-trade negotiations, the EU-China ETS cooperation was initiated upon a clear convergence of political priorities, both the EU and China operated with the clear intention of tackling climate change, which enhanced relationship-building. China is more autonomous in the trade and agriculture domains, while being more dependent on EU technology, and multilateral forums for pushing forward the climate agenda. Furthermore, climate change diplomacy is different from most negotiations in that 'actors are negotiating to get the smallest portion of the pie, as pie represents costs and burdens' to curve emissions, whereas 'negotiations usually aim to get the biggest portion of the pie' (Penetrante, 2013). The complexity of EU-China climate change cooperation was not purely about negotiating a win-win agreement, as was the case of EU-China agricultural-trade negotiations, it was more of generating a stronger climate ambition shared between the EU and China.

The third contrast between the case studies is the unique diplomatic styles of China and the EU exhibited during the relationship-building process. Style in the diplomatic context is partly macro-based in the sense that distinctive characteristics and traditions transcend policy areas in China and the EU's diplomacies, diplomatic style entails the particularities found in the EU and China's respective approaches vis-à-vis different policy issues. Diplomatic style is also partly culturally conditioned at the micro-level to the extent that China and the EU fall under the 'high-context' and 'low-context' ends of the spectrum of negotiation styles. Diplomatic styles may condition or influence negotiators consciously or unconsciously during the process. Yet the encounter of EU and Chinese diplomatic styles is the constant in the evolution of EU-China relations.

The stylistic contrast lies in the distinct dispositions of the EU and China to conduct negotiations. This micro-level of diplomatic style finds its expression in the 'low-context' and 'high-context' negotiating styles (Cohen, 2007). As Cohen purports at the 'conceptual and practical levels', there are two different negotiating ethos characterised as the 'low-context' (individualistic and direct) and 'high-context' (relationship-oriented and indirect) styles. These two styles can be found on the spectrum of the characteristic features that most distinguishes a country's approach to negotiating from others. The European way of negotiation falls in the category of 'low-context' style while China's negotiation style is quintessentially 'high-context' style. The dissonance at the micro-level of diplomatic style that is affected by cultural differences is both 'background and foreground' to the extent that they may elicit cross-cultural misunderstanding and miscommunication therefore bearing negatively on the process; but the salience of the micro-level stylistic differences between the EU and China do not eclipse the consonance

of macro-level diplomatic styles between the EU and China in the areas of agricultural-trade diplomacy and climate change diplomacy.

At the macro-level, the EU exhibits a 'walk the talk' diplomatic style *à la européenne* and China displays a 'shoulder responsibility' diplomatic style with Chinese characteristics that permeate their diplomatic objectives and interactions. There has been a shift in China's strategic thinking as Chinese diplomacy is 'becoming less country-oriented and more multilateral and issue oriented' (Wang, 2011). China is adopting a responsible approach to play a constructive role in international diplomacy ('负责任的态度, 发挥建设性作用') (Zhang, 2014). The EU-style and Chinese-style diplomacies in agricultural-trade and climate change affected the EU-China diplomatic relationship-building process differently. The EU is more assertive in agricultural-trade negotiations, but rely on joint collaboration and more ambitious in terms achieving negotiation objectives in climate change diplomacy. EU-China shared intentions contributed to bridging the stylistic differences in EU-China diplomatic relationship-building. In essence, reconciling two contradictory diplomatic styles remain the challenges facing EU-China relations.

7.3.3 EU-China shared intentions

The theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building brings to the fore the intentional underpinnings of decision-making in diplomatic relationship-building. The theoretical model and subsequent empirical examination have explicated the crucial role shared intentions play in diplomatic relationship-building. The two case studies unveiled a process of shared intentions developing between the EU and China, which were crucial to

the process of EU-China relationship-building in agricultural trade and climate change. While traditional IR renderings of EU-China relations premise upon the prominence of interests and values, this thesis has shown the consequential influence that shared intentions make in shaping diplomatic relationship-building. A certain 'je ne sais quoi' that arouses 'we-feeling', shared intentions develops during diplomatic relationship-building processes. EU-China shared intentions represent the essential catalyst of 'we-ness' shared between the EU and China in the process of diplomatic relationship-building. To a certain extent, shared intentions reflect the strength of the relationship. Strong shared intentions reflect a robust relationship, while weak shared intentions imply a more volatile relationship. As such, shared intentions are not a by-product nor finished outcome of diplomatic relationship-building, but an ongoing process in the course of diplomatic relationship-building. Throughout the EU-China negotiations on GIs and EU-China ETS cooperation, EU-China shared intentions evolved, varied in intensity and affected the process of EU-China building relations. During challenging times of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building, the degree of EU-China shared intentions diminished in the process; During times of negotiation breakthroughs and progress, the most robust form of shared intentions was projected in forging EU-China relations.

EU-China shared intentions manifested itself with subtle differences in EU-China agricultural-trade negotiations and EU-China climate change cooperation. In the case study of EU-China agricultural-trade negotiations, shared intentions manifested as the EU and China's commitment to finding a 'win-win' solution and both seeking a level playing field and reciprocity in trade cooperation. Shared intentions were prominent in breaking negotiation deadlocks in the negotiations on GIs when the lack of interests and values prolonged the talks and even amounting to the stalemate during the period 2016-2017.

In the second case study on EU-China cooperation on emissions trading systems and climate diplomacy, shared intentions manifested as the EU and China sharing climate ambition. The commitment shared between the EU and China to increase climate ambition was crucial to the success of the challenging EU-China cooperation project on emission trading systems. Through a near-decade long negotiation process, the EU and China not only intensified their commitments to climate change mitigation, but also developed converging positions on climate change in international climate negotiations. EU-China shared intentions were potent for the increasing development of EU-China climate change relations, the shared climate ambition between the EU and China served as an incentive for parties to form continuous and stronger climate cooperation.

In both cases, EU-China shared intentions induced mutual understanding, trust-building and cooperation through which the EU and China could extract, engineer and optimise in the process of building their relations. The dynamic interplay of the three essential elements of diplomatic relationship-building reinforced each other and strengthened the development of EU-China shared intentions. The EU-style diplomacy and China-style diplomacy have important impact on the way in which complex substance is negotiated in the process of diplomatic relationship-building. The imprint of structure finds its way in the stylistic element of relationship-building, arguably most evident in the unique structural configuration of the EU system which produces distinct stylisic features in the EU's external relations. The 'design of the institutions within which EU negotiations are embedded' is important to understand the dominant negotiation style of the EU, and that 'institutional factors can account for the variations of the EU's bargaining strategy' (Tallberg, 2010). In short, without shared intentions, diplomatic relationship-building

would be a roll of the dice.

This thesis has revealed a more nuanced, more sophisticated and more intentions-oriented process of EU-China diplomatic relationship-building than conventional undertakings in the field of International Relations would have made to believe. This study may be the first attempt to systematically explore shared intentions in the process of EU-China diplomatic engagement, but it should only be the start of this new avenue of research.

7.4 Policy implications

In advancing our understanding of EU-China relations, the thesis offers potential solutions to the challenges of managing this multifaceted relationship that would be characterised by a relationship in which cooperation coexists with challenges in the years ahead. The theoretical model of diplomatic relationship-building has important practical implications regarding how to assess and better foster the relationship-building between the EU and China. The following policy suggestions can be induced from the thesis' findings regarding ways in which to improve EU-China relations.

First, strengthening EU-China relations requires the fostering of EU-China shared intentions. The management of EU-China relations requires the dual focus of long-term strategic vision and ever closer collective action. Global issues have no passport and effective collaboration requires deeper and wider cooperation. It requires top-level political leadership and resolve to make diplomatic mechanisms more effective. It also requires the strengthening of all institutional capacities undergirding EU-China relations. Enhancing

China-Europe cooperation calls for stronger official diplomatic ties, government-to-government consultation and more institutionalised dialogues involving relevant stakeholders to strengthen political momentum.

Second, focus on widening EU-China sectoral engagement. EU-China agricultural-trade relations could support climate change relations. Green economy and low-carbon transition is the EU's long-term strategic focus and is also top on the agenda of China's development strategy. Green economy and sustainable growth calls for innovation and technology cooperation between China and Europe. Investment in the green economy needs to take place on a greater scale, and both China and Europe would benefit from collaborating more on green finance and technological transfer.

Third, robust EU-China relations require concerted diplomatic efforts to bridge cultural and social differences in Sino-European relations. China and Europe should further promote cultural diplomacy between both sides. Enhancing understanding of Chinese culture, history and society in European countries would boost China's image in Europe. In the same vein, making Chinese people more aware of Europe through tourism, education exchange or ad-hoc cultural events in China would greatly enhance knowledge of the region, and drive further understanding and trust-building between Europe and China.[2] Trust-building would be essential to bridge the diplomatic stylist differences of the EU and China. Shared intentions may not necessarily lead to shared vision but at least could generate a 'we-feeling' that could incentivise common action. Shared intentions need to be built on all levels of EU-China relations including government, business, civil society, research and cultural interactions for a more open, more transparent and more

[2] See for example, 'Engaging Europe', in *Diplomat Magazine*, 16 May 2018

robust EU-China relationship.

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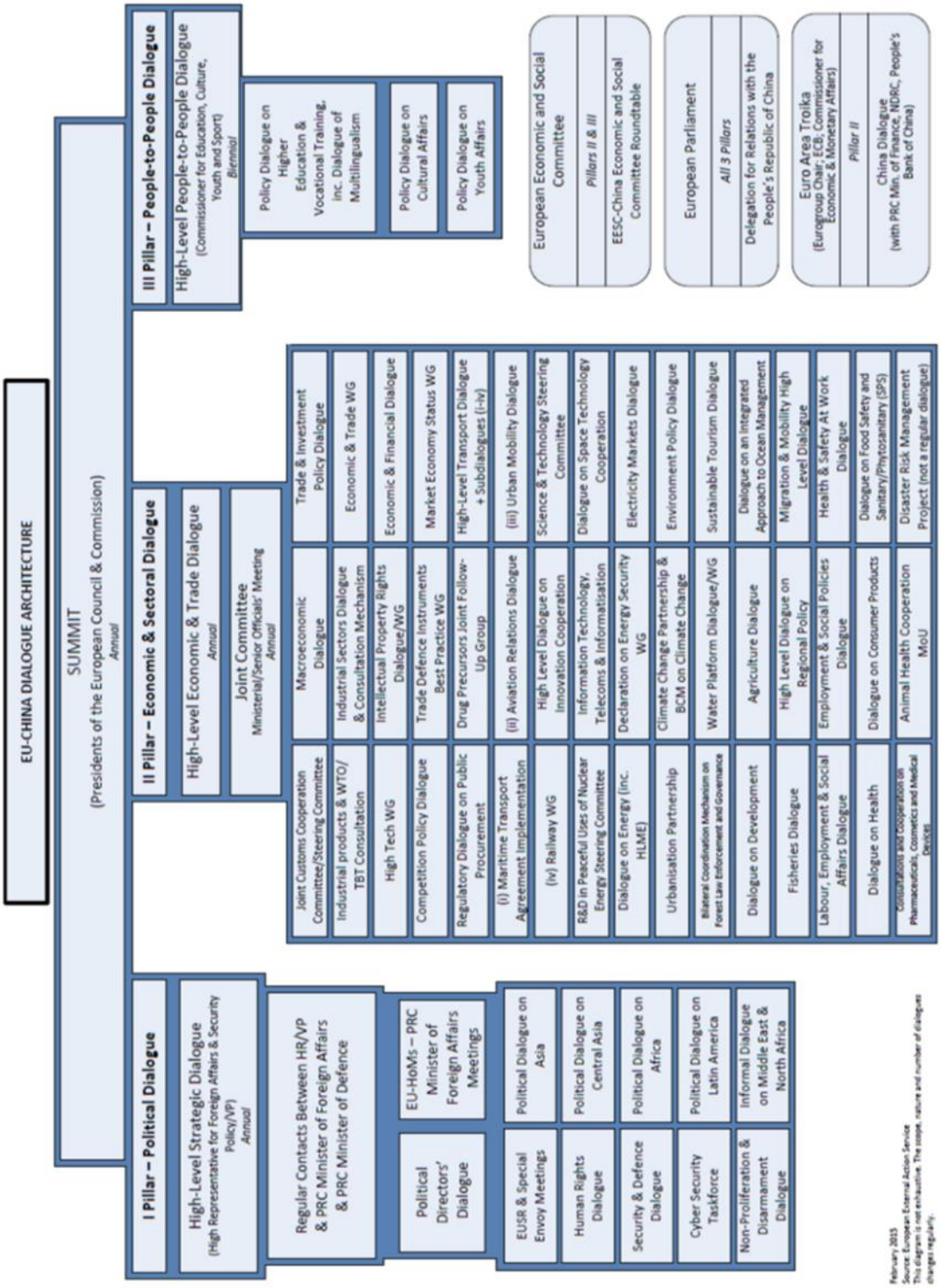
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Annex EU-China Dialogue Architecture



Source : European External Action Service