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China, the ARF, and the South China Sea: Is China Being Socialized?

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In the past, scholars have drawn optimistic conclusions about the ASEAN Regional Forum's (ARF) ability to socialize China into a system of peaceful norms. However, China's renewed assertiveness in the South China Sea calls into question much of this earlier optimism. In response to China's behavior, ARF members have applied normative pressure on China by criticizing China in the ARF and related fora. In light of these recent developments one might believe that the ARF is socializing China. This paper argues that China has internalized ARF norms at an uneven pace, resulting in apparently erratic behavior. In addition, China views the ARF as an important institution both normatively and instrumentally. Consequently, China is responsive to normative pressure from ARF member countries.

Introduction

China's economic rise, military modernization, and increased assertiveness in the South China Sea have alarmed its regional neighbors. The member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN),[i] uncertain about the intentions of a rising China, are attempting to enmesh the People's Republic of China (PRC) in a web of institutional agreements to engage it and temper its potentially hegemonic ambitions.[ii] The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF),[iii] the central security forum for the Asia-Pacific, seeks to socialize the PRC into a system of cooperative security norms (e.g., confidence building measures, transparency, and preventative diplomacy). Socialization is the process by which a state or actor joins a community and must adapt to the community's norms for various normative and or instrumental reasons.[iv] As China continues to

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rise, its acceptance of international norms will impact the prospects for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific.

In the past, scholars such as Iain Johnston (2008) have argued that the ARF is, in fact, socializing the PRC into accepting and even internalizing some of the ARF's cooperative security norms.[v] However, recent developments in the South China Sea challenge these earlier assessments. In recent years, the PRC has behaved assertively in the South China Sea by engaging in military skirmishes and provocatively declaring the South China Sea as one of its "core interests." In response to PRC's behavior, ARF members have applied normative pressure[vi] on China by criticizing it in the ARF and related fora such as the ASEAN Plus Eight [vii] in 2010.[viii] In light of these recent developments, can we say that the ARF is succeeding in socializing the PRC? And if the ARF is socializing China, to what extent is it doing so?

This paper argues that the ARF is indeed socializing the PRC, but only to a limited degree. Utilizing Amitav Acharya's (2011) "Type 3" socialization framework – the

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argument is made that China has internalized ARF norms at an uneven pace, resulting in incoherent and erratic behavior. This lends the appearance of Chinese foreign policy alternating between cooperation and assertiveness. Despite this recent trend in behavior, this paper contends that the PRC views the ARF as an important institution both normatively and instrumentally. Because China values the ARF for these reasons, the PRC is, and will likely continue to be, responsive to normative pressure from ARF member countries.

This paper will first briefly discuss socialization theory. Second, it will review the PRC's relationship with the ARF. Third, it will account for more recent developments by examining China's recent aggression in the South China Sea, its swift rebuke (or normative pressure) by ASEAN member countries, and the PRC's response to this pressure.

Socialization Theory

There are several competing explanations regarding the efficacy of international institutions. Whereas realists tend to dismiss institutions as merely being adjuncts to balance-of-power politics,[ix] neoliberals emphasize the contractual or utilitarian nature of institutions, specifically their ability to reduce transaction costs and dampen insecurity by providing transparency.[x] However, considering the notoriously under-institutionalized and informal nature of Asian regional organizations,[xi] neoliberals often view Asia as too anomalous to be integrated into broader theoretical literature about international organizations.[xii] Both realist and neoliberal explanations are inadequate for examining the role that ASEAN's "soft" institutions have played in promoting peace and stability in the politically, economically, and culturally diverse region of Southeast Asia. Thus, this paper focuses on the constructivist claim that institutions serve as sites for socializing states or agents.[xiii] This essay does not attempt to comprehensively review the literature on socialization, but will instead discuss some of the prominent themes that are relevant to this study, and elucidate the theoretical framework that guides this paper.

According to international relations scholar Jeffrey Checkel (2005), socialization is a process whereby an actor joins a new community with different rules and norms. Successful socialization results in the actor adopting these rules, and ultimately internalizing, and thus complying with, the community's norms on a sustained basis.[xiv] Checkel also notes that socialization is a process whereby state or agent behavior switches to become motivated by a "logic of appropriateness" rather than a "logic of consequences."[xv] This approach is most suitable for assessing the utility of the ARF. After emerging from years of colonial rule, ASEAN member countries have embraced norms such as the respect for sovereignty and non-interference. This has led to ASEAN and its related institutions' (e.g., the ARF) unique informality and under-legalization, in contrast to institutions such as those in the European Union.[xvi] Thus, considering the highly *informal* nature of the ARF, socialization theory helps to illustrate the utility of the ARF for mitigating the PRC's potentially hegemonic

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regional ambitions, because this approach emphasizes the role of ideas rather than material incentives.

Alastair Iain Johnston (2003) highlights two key themes in socialization theory. First, according to Johnston, socialization is aimed at *newcomers*.[xvii] This newness means that the actor will likely exhibit beliefs different from (though not necessarily incompatible with) those of the institution they are joining. Newness also means the actor is an outsider, attempting to be accepted by the group it is joining. The second theme of socialization is *norm internalization*: an actor joins a group and internalizes the values, roles, and understandings held by the group.[xviii] Once internalized, the norm develops a "taken for grantedness" by the actor that makes the norm difficult to change.[xix]

Despite the abundant literature on socialization, constructivists often fail to specify how and why the main mechanism of socialization – persuasion – works. Persuasion, in short, is the process by which a community, without overtly material or mental coercion, convinces a newcomer to alter its attitude or values. [xx] There are three general ways to persuade an actor. In the first process, the actor undergoing persuasion attempts to reconcile new information with its own internal, pre-existing belief system. The actor is more likely to be persuaded if he or she enters into a cognition-rich environment that allows the actor to consider these causal connections and cognitive cues.[xxi] The second category of persuasion focuses on how the target of persuasion evaluates new information received based on the perceived legitimacy of the persuader. The actor will be more receptive to new norms as it increases contact with the group, or if the information is from a culturally recognized authority.[xxii] In the third category, persuasion is determined by the individual characteristics of the actor undergoing persuasion. For example, states or agents that are sensitive to being perceived as hypocrites may have difficulty making behavioral change if this change contradicts the state or agent's previous actions.[xxiii] Persuasion will most likely succeed when all three types are at work.

Depending on how successful persuasion is, a state or agent might experience different types of norm internalization. Checkel describes two of these types. In Type 1 internalization, the agent or state being socialized learns to role-play to meet group expectations, whether the state or agent "likes the role or agrees with it."[xxiv] Most importantly, in Type I internalization, "conscious instrumental calculation [is] replaced by conscious role playing."[xxv] Type II internalization, on the other hand, represents a much deeper form of socialization than Type I. In Type II internalization, the agent or state accepts and internalizes the norms of the group or community that it joins.[xxvi] In Type II internalization, an actor's or state's decision to join a community is consciously instrumental at the outset. However the actor or state ultimately begins to accept the community's norms and even takes them for granted. [xxvii] In both Type I and Type II internalization, the agent being socialized adopts a *logic of appropriateness* rather than a *logic of consequences*. Adopting a logic of appropriateness means that a state or actor joining a group alters its behavior to fit the group's norms, because it views these norms positively in a normative sense. States or actors motivated by a logic of consequences, on the other hand, alter their behavior not because they accept the group's norms, but instead because they either see material benefits in doing so or they fear the consequences of not altering their behavior.

Amitav Acharya argues for an additional type of internalization – Type III internalization. Unlike Types I and II, Type III internalization does not require norm internalization to replace instrumental calculation.[xxviii] Instead, in Type III internalization, agents or states are motivated by instrumental and normative calculations on a more or less permanent basis. [xxix] Acharya states that Type III internalization is often a slow and uneven process. Not all of the community's norms are adopted at the same time.[xxx] Although Type III internalization may not necessarily result in Type I or II internalization, Type III internalization is irreversible, and there is no danger of backtracking.[xxxi] Thus, even if the state or agent has not internalized all of the norms of the institution it is joining (uneven socialization), its partial socialization means that the state or agent will continue to be persuaded by the institution or socializer. Therefore, if a

state or agent violates the normative values of an institution, it will still respond positively to normative pressure. This is because the state or agent values the institution for a mixture of instrumental and normative reasons.[xxxii]

China and the ARF

China's motivations for joining the ARF were instrumental at the outset. However, as the PRC has interacted with the ARF, it has internalized some of the ARF's norms. Therefore, China's relationship with the ARF is both instrumental *and* normative, because the PRC's behavior is motivated by both a logic of consequences and a logic of appropriateness. This section will discuss both China and the ARF's initial interest in one another and provide evidence that China has indeed begun internalizing some, though not necessarily all, of the ARF's norms.

The ARF was officially established during the 26th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and Post Ministerial Conference in 1993.[xxxiii] This multilateral security forum's two main objectives are encouraging a political and security dialogue, and encouraging confidence building measures, with the ultimate goal of preventative diplomacy.[xxxiv] The ARF provides a dialogue on political and security affairs, is transparent, and makes decisions consensually and without interference, thus, progress is incremental.[xxxv] Johnston says these characteristics make the ARF a counter-realpolitik institution. This is because ASEAN member states believe that security can be met through reassurance rather than traditional realpolitik strategies.[xxxvi] It is important to note that in spite of the ARF's diverse membership, ASEAN remains in the "driver's seat" of the ARF. This is partly due to default, but also because there is no other country that is seen as a legitimate replacement for ASEAN's leadership position.[xxxvii] Thus, in many ways, the ARF's normative framework and agenda reflect those of ASEAN's.

According to Carlyle Thayer (2000), the creation of the ARF was the result of a convergence of three factors: strategic uncertainty, the interaction of regional security think tanks, and accommodation among

states in the Asia-Political region.[xxxviii] Most important, for the purposes of this paper, is the role of strategic uncertainty. Thayer notes that in the early 1990s the United States began to withdraw from its military bases, while a rising China was simultaneously behaving more assertively in the South China Sea. In addition, many in the region perceived new security challenges in the region as too difficult to be resolved through bilateral military alliances alone.[xxxix] While ARF members saw the ARF as a venue for preventing China from becoming a dissatisfied revisionist power, the PRC joined the ARF for instrumental reasons.[xl] According to Acharya, China believed joining the ARF would help its image internationally (lending credence to China's "peaceful rise" rhetoric), help establish a stable regional environment to bolster China's continued economic development, and to use ASEAN's support to block any US efforts to contain China.[xli]

It is important to note that China was initially reluctant to join the ARF. The PRC did not have much experience interacting on a multilateral basis, was uneasy as a communist regime in an organization of full of democratic or semi-democratic regimes, and feared that the ARF would be used by the United States as a tool for containment.[xlii] This fear is legitimate considering China's strained history with the West and its adversarial relationship with the United States early in the Cold War (e.g., the Korean War). Following increased contact with the ARF, the PRC began to view the ARF more as a neutral player than as a tool of the United States.[xliii] The PRC was also reassured by the ARF's ASEAN-based principles of non-interference, consensus decision-making, and incremental progress.[xliv]

When the PRC joined the ARF, it was inexperienced with interacting in multilateral organizations.[xlv] According to Johnston, Chinese foreign policy discourse emphasized the importance of bilateral over multilateral interactions for accomplishing foreign policy goals.[xlvi] Thomas Christensen (1996) adds that as a realpolitik power, China did not trust multilateral organizations. China joined these institutions merely to avoid damaging its reputation.[xlvii] China's inexperience with multilateral organizations is important because, as emphasized in the literature on

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socialization, it is essential that states or agents undergoing socialization are beginners or novices.

After joining the ARF, the PRC made several symbolic gestures to indicate that it was cooperating with ARF norms. Following the 1995 Mischief Reef Incident, when China unilaterally began construction on disputed territory claimed by the Philippines, China announced that it was ready to work with others to settle the dispute through peaceful means according to international law and legal regimes defined in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).[xlviii] Although this gesture can be seen as a shrewd measure used to mollify regional concerns of Chinese aggression, it also signifies that the PRC is image-conscious and willing to engage in some forms of multilateral negotiation. By the 1996 ARF meeting, China offered to co-chair an ISG intersessional group on CBMs (confidence building measures) with the Philippines in 1997.[xlix] This gesture was especially significant considering the short time lapse since the Mischief Reef incident. In addition, Johnston argues that although the PRC was initially skeptical of CBMs, Chinese officials have made efforts to demonstrate transparency. The PRC presented its first defense white paper in 1996, and produced a more detailed, follow-up defense white paper in 1998.[1] The release of these white papers represents not only cooperation with ARF norms, but a significant CBM, since these white papers shed light on Chinese military strategy.

China has also demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with ARF norms by releasing policy concept papers and by signing a number of regional cooperative security treaties. In 1996, China released its New Security Concept. This report revived the PRC's support for the UN's Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which include the principle of "peacefully [resolving] territorial and border disputes and other controversial issues through negotiations."[li] In 1999, the PRC made another significant symbolic gesture by becoming the first nuclear power to express interest in signing the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) treaty. However, China has still not signed this treaty.[lii] Perhaps one of its most significant symbolic gestures in regards to the South China Sea was its signing with ASEAN of the Declaration on

the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). This document commits signatories to resolving territorial and jurisdictional disputes peacefully, and to respect freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.[liii] The following year, the PRC made an equally significant gesture by acceding to one of the normative bedrock documents of the ARF – the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC).[liv] This move is important symbolically, because the TAC enshrines values such as "non-interference in the internal affairs of one another; [the] settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means; [and the] renunciation of the threat of the use of force."[lv] However, it is necessary to note that both the TAC and DoC are non-binding and lack enforcement measures.

While the evidence above highlights increasing cooperation by the PRC, it does not necessarily imply that ARF norms – e.g., confidence-building, preventive diplomacy, decision-making by consensus, non-interference, transparency – are internalized. China's actions may, instead, be motivated by a logic of consequences (fear of losing influence), rather than a logic of appropriateness. Johnston, however, provides evidence that China has indeed begun internalizing some ARF norms. Johnston analyzed Chinese foreign policy discourse by conducting numerous interviews and by examining foreign policy journals and articles. He concluded that China's increasing interaction with ARF has created a constituency within China's foreign policy apparatus which believes that cooperative security and multilateralism are preferable to unilateral decision-making.[lvi] Johnston's research indicates that although some of China's motivations for joining the ARF may have been motivated by realpolitik and instrumental strategies, the PRC has begun to internalize some of the ARF's norms. Furthermore, as described above, this internalization has led China to engage in more cooperative activities, increase transparency (e.g., publishing defense white papers), and engage in CBMs. China's instrumental calculus (e.g., enhancing the PRC's regional status) and its normative interest in the ARF are consistent with the Type III internalization framework.

Aggression in the South China Sea

The South China Sea has been a source of regional tension for several decades. The PRC has long had an interest in maintaining its sovereign claims in the South China Sea, attracted by its numerous fisheries, vast oil and natural gas reserves, and critical shipping lanes. The PRC's legal claims in the South China Sea run along an ambiguously defined "9-dash line" or "cow's tongue," which covers the majority of the South China Sea.[lvii]
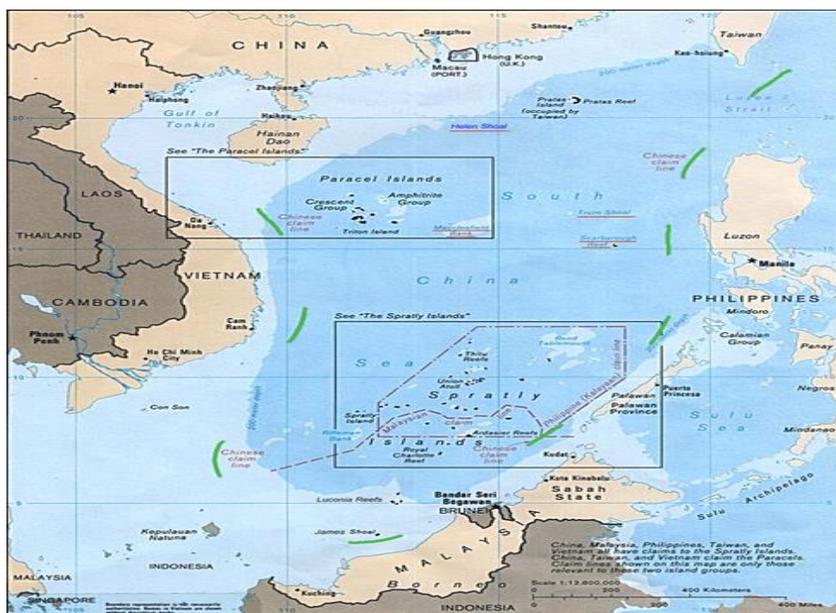
Map 1.1. China's Territorial Claims in the South China Sea – The "9-Dash Line"[lviii]

In addition to decades of minor skirmishes, China has also engaged in significant conflicts in the South China Sea, including its 1974 clash with the South Vietnamese over the Paracel Islands (which resulted in the PRC's total control of the islands), the 1988 Sino-Vietnamese clash over the Spratly islands (which gave China control over six of the islands), and Sino-Philippines tensions over Mischief Reef in 1995 and 1999.[lix] As noted earlier, the PRC made several peaceful overtures in the late 1990s

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and early 2000s, including signing the TAC, developing a new security concept, working to resolve its disputes with the Philippines peacefully, and signing the DoC. These measures helped to improve China's image in the region and dissipate fears that China's rise would be accompanied by a disregard for sovereignty and international law.

Much of the goodwill the PRC established in the late 1990s and early 2000s has been undermined by its recent assertiveness in the South China Sea. Although it could be argued that this assertiveness demonstrates that socialization has failed, China's inconsistent behavior (behaving cooperatively, then aggressively) is actually a symptom of uneven norm internalization characterized in Acharya's Type III socialization framework. ARF countries have responded to China's assertiveness with criticism and pressure. In response, China has backed away from its more inflammatory rhetoric (e.g., declaring that sensitive issues involve "core interests") and has attempted to reassure ARF members of its peaceful intentions.[lx] By responding to normative pressure, China demonstrates that it can be persuaded by ARF members.

In recent years, the PRC's actions and rhetoric in regards to resolving territorial disputes both in and around the South China Sea have become increasingly assertive. An increasing number of Chinese vessels have operated in the waters near Okinawa since 2008. For example, when Japanese destroyers followed Chinese ships near Okinawa in 2010, a Chinese helicopter flew within close proximity of one of the destroyers.[lxi] Not long after, Japan also arrested a Chinese fisherman after the fisherman's boat collided with Japanese coast guard ships around Okinawa. Analysts argue that many of these civilian-fishing vessels are, in fact, proxies for the Chinese Navy, as the numbers of purported "fishing boats" in disputed territorial waters have been on the rise in recent years.[lxii] The PRC responded to this arrest with harsh diplomatic measures, including demanding a formal apology, threatening economic sanctions, and cutting off ministerial level contacts between the two countries.[lxiii] The Chinese government also halted exports of rare earth minerals to Japan. This move was highly provocative, considering that rare earth minerals are essential for Japan's high-tech economy.[lxiv]

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China has also acted assertively when dealing with the Philippines. In February 2011, Chinese military vessels approached Philippine fishing boats operating around Reed Bank. The vessels' operators warned the fisherman to leave "Chinese territory," and threatened to shoot the Philippine boats. When the fishing boats withdrew, Chinese ships reportedly fired three shots at the vessels.[lxv] These were not isolated cases; according to Thayer, many other Chinese aircraft and surveillance ships were observed in this disputed region in 2011. The Philippine government has criticized China directly and has taken their case to the United Nations. The Chinese government has responded that their actions were legal since they occurred within China's sovereign waters.[lxvi]

Chinese behavior toward Vietnam also follows this pattern of aggression in the region. In 2011, the PRC unilaterally issued a fishing ban for disputed waters in the South China Sea, according to Thayer.[lxvii] To enforce this fishing ban, China deployed a Fishery Administration vessel to the waters surrounding the Paracel Islands.[lxviii] At the same time, there was reportedly an increase in the number of Chinese fishing vessels in Vietnamese waters. There have also been reports of Chinese military vessels threatening to use force against Vietnamese fishing boats.[lxix] In May of 2011, Vietnam alleged that Chinese patrol boats deliberately cut Vietnam's gas and oil survey ship's cables in Vietnamese waters.[lxx] These actions have increased friction between Vietnam and the PRC, as evidenced by anti-China demonstrations in Vietnam, and Vietnam engaging in live-fire naval exercises.[lxxi] China's unilateral fishing ban and increased violence were viewed by Vietnam as both disregard for its legitimate sovereign claims, and as evidence of Chinese realpolitik behavior.

Much like its assertive actions in the South China Sea, China's rhetoric has become increasingly bellicose as well. In private meetings with US officials, the PRC has reportedly referred to the South China Sea as a core interest. The term "core interest" has been used to refer to issues relating to China's territorial integrity, such as Xinjiang, Tibet, and Taiwan – issues that China would arguably be willing to go to war over.[lxxii] In May

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of 2010, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asserted that Dai Bingguo, China's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, used the term "core interest" to describe the South China Sea. This claim, however, is disputed by academics in both the US and China.[lxxiii] Furthermore, research by Michael Swaine suggests that there may be disagreements among China's leadership about whether the South China Sea should be considered a core interest.[lxxiv] Although there may be disagreement between Chinese leaders about whether the South China Sea is a core interest, shortly following Clinton's assertions about Dai Bingguo, China's *Global Times* (the English edition) posted an editorial that argued the United States was attempting to meddle in the region, and that the PRC had the right to protects its "core interests in the South China Sea, by military force if necessary."[lxxv] Considering the PRC's tight control of the media, this could likely be indicative of the PRC's viewpoint. In addition, the *People's Daily,* one of China's leading newspapers, published a survey asking if the South China Sea should be considered China's "core interest" – with over 97 percent responding that it should be considered as such.[lxxvi] Considering the high degree of Chinese state control over the media, these articles suggest at least tacit support for the idea of labeling the South China Sea as a core interest.

China's recent assertiveness contradicted its earlier indications of cooperation (e.g., agreeing to some CBMs, signing the TAC). As a result, many regional powers have expressed concern that China would be less willing to settle disputes in the South China Sea peacefully. For example, ARF members have jointly criticized the PRC for its aggressive behavior, and in doing so, have applied normative pressure on China. During the 2010 ARF meeting in Hanoi, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton surprised many Chinese officials by declaring, "the resolution of territorial disputes was a matter of America's national interest."[lxxvii] Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi threatened to punish the Southeast Asian economically. During a closed-door meeting, Yang declared, "China is a big country and other countries are small countries, and that is just a fact."[lxxviii] This strong reaction by the Chinese foreign minister highlights the PRC's frustration with the ARF members' criticism.

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ARF members have continued to apply normative pressure on the PRC in other ARF related fora. During the annual ASEAN Plus 8 meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam orchestrated what has been described as a diplomatic ambush on China.[lxxix] During this meeting, Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie was lectured by several ASEAN member countries on the need to resolve territorial disputes in the South China Sea through regional discussions.[lxxx] Later that month, during the 2010 East Asian Summit (EAS), then-US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton once again raised the issue of the South China Sea, and encouraged participants to adopt an agenda for peacefully resolving disputes there.[lxxxi] Through multiple meetings and dialogues, ARF members have expressed their displeasure with Chinese behavior in the South China Sea.

Due to the contemporary nature of these issues, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about shifts in Chinese behavior. However, there are indications that – as predicted by the theory of Type III internalization – The PRC is being persuaded by the ARF's normative pressure. Although China may not agree with ARF members, after undergoing normative persuasion from ARF members, China is backing away from its earlier hostility. Although Chinese newspapers were previously open to discussing the issue of core interests in the South China Sea, Wong states that in the fall of 2011, Chinese news organizations were ordered to quit discussing the issue of the South China Sea being a "core interest."[lxxxii] As Joseph Nye points out, the PRC is likely backing away from this hostile rhetoric because of the frictions this is causing between China and ASEAN, and China and the United States.[lxxxiii] In addition to these gestures, US officials noted the conspicuous absence of the word "bilateralism" in a recent meeting between US President Barack Obama and Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao.[lxxxiv] This is significant considering PRC's long-held insistence on resolving disputes in the South China Sea on a bilateral basis. In addition to softening its rhetoric, the Chinese military has been less active in the region. Admiral Robert Willard, head of the US Pacific Command, stated before the US Senate Armed Services Committee that in 2011, China had acted less assertively in the South China Sea compared to the previous year.[lxxxv]

China has also taken measures to reassure ARF members of its peaceful intentions. During the most recent (July 2011) ARF meeting in Bali, PRC agreed on guidelines to implement the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct (DoC) of Parties in the South China Sea.[lxxxvi] This move by China indicates that it wants to reaffirm its benign intentions. By agreeing on guidelines for implementing the DoC, China and ASEAN are taking a step toward creating a more binding code of conduct. The PRC has also moved to clarify its claims over the South China Sea. When discussing the PRC's territorial disputes with the Philippines, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesmen Hong Lei remarked that China had sovereign claims over islands in the South China Sea and their adjacent territorial waters.[lxxxvii]As observed by former US Ambassador to China, Stapleton Roy, this language represents a subtle, yet important shift in terms of China's claims in the South China Sea. Until recently, the PRC's claims have only been ambiguously defined as the waters within the 9-dash line. This arguably gave China control over almost the entire South China Sea. By claiming specific territories and their adjacent waters, the PRC is clarifying and limiting the scope of its claims.

Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, these territorial claims would still give the PRC extensive claims over the South China Sea by providing China large Exclusive Economic Zones and territorial waters. However, since many of the islands are uninhabitable, China's claims would be further reduced. Furthermore, this change in language represents a marked reduction in the PRC's claims over all the waters within the 9-dash line.[lxxxviii] Overall, Chinese actions demonstrate that it is image-conscious and responsive to normative pressure from ARF member countries. Although China may renege on these positive gestures in the future, China's behavior demonstrates that it views the ARF as a valuable institution and wants to maintain a positive image.

Conclusion

Although the PRC has acted assertively in the South China Sea in recent years, the ARF is indeed socializing China – but only to a limited degree. Influenced by both normative and instrumental considerations, China's

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socialization by the ARF can be categorized as Type III internalization. While China has not comprehensively adopted all of the ARF's norms in all issue areas (e.g., multilateralism), the PRC is still influenced by ARF normative pressure. This is evidenced by the PRC "backing away" from its more assertive posture in the South China Sea after being pressured by ARF member countries. Even though gains from Type III internalization may be irreversible, there is no guarantee that China will experience a deeper Type II internalization. Until China undergoes a deeper process of norm internalization, it is likely that China will continue to behave inconsistently on issue areas covered by the ARF, creating a frictional relationship between the PRC and other ARF member countries.

As stated earlier, Johnston describes three general processes or factors that influence persuasion. These include: [1] cognition, reflection, and argument about the content of new information, [2] the perceived legitimacy of the persuader, and [3] the characteristics and pre-existing beliefs of the agent or state being socialized.[lxxxix]
Satisfying the conditions of the first two processes requires a cognition-rich environment and a persuader that is perceived to be legitimate. Since the persuader in this case is the ARF, altering its environment or legitimacy would likely require restructuring the ARF either in form, content, or membership. One method for improving the perceived legitimacy of the persuader – the ARF – is by increasing China's exposure to and contact with the ARF.[xc] In simpler terms, China would need to interact with ARF more frequently and over a long period of time. However, considering that the ARF has been in existence for over 17 years (18 in July 2012), The PRC has had ample time to interact with the ARF. Thus, it is hard to imagine that merely increasing contact will change China's normative preferences.

Perhaps the ARF's ability to socialize China will depend on the third factor influencing persuasion: the individual characteristics or preexisting beliefs of the agent or state being socialized. In this case, the PRC's receptivity to ARF norms on issues such as multilateralism will depend on the malleability of China's pre-existing beliefs in regard to these issue areas. China has been wary of multilateralism for a long time. After

suffering at the hand of European colonial powers,[xci] China has been skeptical of collaborating with Western powers. Furthermore, when dealing with smaller powers, the PRC has often preferred to deal bilaterally in order to take advantage of its size. However, in recent years, Chinese foreign policy has, arguably, undergone a shift away from realist and toward constructivist thinking. Johnston notes, "The PRC has become more integrated into and more cooperative within international institutions than ever before."[xcii] This constructivist turn in Chinese foreign policy could suggest that China's preexisting belief system is, in fact, malleable.

One way to determine the malleability of China's existing belief system is to understand China's recent assertiveness in the South China Sea. There could be multiple reasons for this behavior, including, but not limited to: domestic factors (Chinese leadership); increasing Chinese nationalism; or realist explanations (energy security or asserting hegemony). If domestic factors, such as China's current leadership, explain China's behavior then perhaps its pre-existing beliefs are more malleable. As a result, we may see a change in China's receptiveness to ARF norms as its new leadership continues to consolidate power and implement new policies. On the other hand, if domestic explanations based on increasing Chinese nationalism or realist explanations linking China's rise with assertive behavior and a decline in US power prove correct, then China's preexisting belief system may be less malleable.[xciii] In this case, the PRC will likely not undergo a deeper socialization. Further research should investigate the key causal mechanism behind Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea.

By exhibiting Type III socialization, China demonstrates that institutions can influence states to behave in ways that they otherwise would not. With few material incentives to offer, the ARF has been able to persuade the PRC to behave more cooperatively than it would have otherwise. Beyond examining China's relations with the ARF, this paper highlights that institutions do more than reflect the interests of great power. Ultimately, institutions serve as sites for socialization.

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[i] ASEAN members include Brunei Darussalam, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

[ii] Ellen L. Frost, *Asia's New Regionalism* (London: Lynne Reiner Publishers, 2008), 14.

[iii] ARF members currently include Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, East Timor, European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, The Philippines, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United States of America, Vietnam. "List of ARF Foreign Ministers, Senior Officials, and Officials," *The Association of Southeast Asian Nations* (2009), http://www.aseansec.org/16421.htm

[iv] Alice Ba, "Who's Socializing Whom? Complex Engagement in Sino-ASEAN relations," *The Pacific Review* 19, no. 2 (June 2006): 158-159

[v] Alastair Iain Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions 1980-2000* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[vi] Johnston equates normative pressure with "shaming or social opprobrium […]" Alastair Iain Johnston, "Socialization in International Relations Theory," in ed. G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, "International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific," (New York: Columbia University Press 2003), 113.

[vii] ASEAN Plus 8 includes ASEAN members plus Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea, and the United States.

[viii] I will discuss the ARF's normative pressure in further detail below.

[ix] See John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no.3 (Winter 1994/1995).

[x] See Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power From Messina to Maastricht*, (New York: Cornell University Press 1998); Robert O. *Keohane* and Lisa L. *Martin*, "The *Promise of Institutionalist Theory,*" *International Security* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1995).

[xi] This will be discussed in further detail below.

[xii] Amitav Acharya, "Regional Institutions and Asian Security Order: Norms, Power and Prospects for Peaceful Change," in Muthiah Alagappa, *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press): 210.

[xiii] Jeffrey T. Checkel, "International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework," *International Organization* 59, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 804.

[xiv] Checkel 2005, 804.

[xv] Ibid.

[xvi] For a further discussion of the origins of ASEAN and its normative framework, see Amitav Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter: Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2009).

[xvii] Johnston 2003, 115.

[xviii] Ibid.

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[xx] Johnston 2003, 115.

[xxi] Ibid. 116.

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[xxviii] Amitav Acharya, "Asian Regional Institutions and the Possibilities for Socializing the Behavior of States," *Asian Development Bank*, no. 82 (June 2011): 13. Available at http://aric.adb.org/pdf/workingpaper/WP82_Acharya_Asian_Regional_Institutions.pdf

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[xxxv] Ibid.

[xxxvi] Johnston 2003, 123.

[xxxvii] Rodolfo C. Severino, *The ASEAN Regional Forum*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies 2009), 40 – 41.

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