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## Abbreviations

AI	Amnesty International
BITC	Business in the Community
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Environmental Agency
EITI	Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EITI	Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
ETI	Ethical Trading Initiative
IBLF	International Business Leaders Forum
CELAP	China Executive Leadership Academy Pudong
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CORE	Corporate Responsibility Coalition
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GC	Global Compact
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
GTI	Global Reporting Initiative
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NEF	New Economics Foundation
NPE	Normative Power Europe
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODA	Official Development Aid
PRC	People's Republic of China
RMI	Raw Material Initiative
TNC	Transnational Corporation

UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations Commission of Human Rights
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization
US	United States
VAT	Value Added Tax
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

Ideational factors, which range from democracy to human rights, from sustainable peace to multilateralism, have long played an important role in the European Union's (EU) foreign policies toward China, with a wide range of issues that could be found in recent decades such as the arms embargo, resolutions critical of China's human rights in United Nations Commission of Human Rights (UNCHR), and many other fields in EU-China relations. Despite the significance of ideational factors, it is tempting but premature to conclude that the EU's external policies towards China have been dominated by normative power. The policy preference of the EU towards China is affected by the role of institutions in facilitating the emergence of a sense of community based on shared norms, interests and a common identity. Yet EU positions, decision and actions in the world are produced as the result of often complex interactions in a multi-level system, involving the member states singly and collectively, as well as the common institutions (Hill and Smith, 2005). Would such complex interactions bring some kind of convergence in a normative European policy towards China? How does China respond to the emergence of ideational factors in bilateral relations? Does China see the EU as a normative power? Thus, social constructivist tools should be applied to analyze the emergence of ideational factors as a consequence of both internal interaction within the EU and external interaction between Europe and China.

I will focus my research on the notion of Normative Power Europe (NPE) by examining the role of ideational factors in EU's foreign and security policies toward China, as well as China's perception of EU's promotions and pressures in these values through case studies. More specifically, the study is a two-step process. The first stage is to explore the different goals of multiple European actors and how these goals interact with normative factors in shaping their foreign policy towards China. In this stage, analytical target is not restricted to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) or European Commission (EC) level, but takes into account member states' positions and foreign policies toward

China. In the second stage, China's perception of Europe's normative driven policies will be introduced, by looking into the response of Beijing and relevant literature. This research attempts to explain the lack of a normative convergence in EU and reveal China's perception in EU's normative power.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

There are some methodological assumptions underlying European studies, such as the methodological pluralism. No single approach comes near being adequate by itself in providing a sound explanation. The EU is neither a state nor a traditional alliance, and it therefore represents a heterodox unit of analysis (Andreatta, 2005). In our case, liberal-intergovernmentalism and constructivism together would best serve our purpose as liberal-intergovernmentalism envisages a world in which governments act on two arenas (the domestic and the international) simultaneously and constructivism emphasizes the importance of cognitive factors in the elaboration of foreign policy and the fact that states do not seek only material objectives but are also inspired by ideological motivations (Andreatta, 2005).

### *Liberal-intergovernmentalism*

The theoretical analysis of European foreign policy towards China should rest on the significant role that Member States play in policy formulation and implementation, with their domestically-generated interests and policy preferences. This is not only true at the intergovernmental CFSP level for each Member State, but also at the European Commission level, where the sharing of competences and Member States' supervision of the Commission do not exclude the application of intergovernmentalist approaches. In a liberal-intergovernmentalist perspective, Member States are the basis of European foreign policy toward China and they are the principal decision-makers within the three policy levels of European Commission external relations, the CFSP, and of course their own national foreign policies.



Intergovernmentalism distinguishes from realism and neo-realism as it recognizes the significance of European institutionalization in EU-China relations and the impact of domestic factors, including ideational factors, upon policy preferences. Institutions do matter in defining and shaping Member States' interests and policy preferences. Institutions favor processes of socialization and Europeanization; they establish norms of behavior that require convergence and logic of appropriateness. Besides, institutions could involve supranational actors which can wield significant powers in the terms of Commission actions regarding EC external relations and in terms of networks of representatives in the case of the CFSP.

### *Constructivism*

Constructivist approach sees European institutions as a normative entity. At a minimum level, the fact that the EU exists creates pressures to preserve its unity, and develops a consistent bias toward common, rather than national, positions and at a maximum, the existence of the EU as an institution which embodies certain principles – democracy, the rule of law, human rights, free markets – creates an incentive for states to sustain those same objectives and constitute a “European” identity (Andreatta, 2005). In this sense, states which are part of the process become socialized with institutional aims and with those of other members, and thus institutions allow governments to become intimately acquainted with the goals, aversions, tastes and domestic constraints of each other (Sandholtz, 1996). Having provided a normative framework within the EU, it then could project these instincts externally.

Internally, Member States' interests and policy preferences both at EU and domestic levels are assumed to be initially formed within their national boundaries but then also obviously shaped through the interaction within EU institutions, where various supranational and transnational actors enjoy certain level of influence. Externally, pressures from China on Member States' preferences and interests are significant in explaining the European policy outcomes but only if they are conceived, in a constructivist perspective, as being filtered through EU institutions.

Moreover, constructivism could serve as a bridge linking analysis of EU's policies on China with China's perception of EU. In a constructivist perspective, the structure of EU-China relations is determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature. Constructivism creates necessary room for identities and interests of international actors like EU. Constructivists also see such identities and interests as the result of ideas and the social construction of such ideas (Wendt, 1999). In the literature on NPE, EU identity greatly contributes to the formulation and implementation of EU foreign policy. Therefore, when analyzing the explanatory power of identity in the European foreign policies toward China, it is necessary to consider the interaction among EU identity and those of its Member States.

### **1.3 Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Case Selection**

The research questions in this paper involve three parts. The first one defines the terms and scope of this research. The most important one, i.e. the second one, looks into the divergence among multiple EU actors. The third one offers feedback of the EU's normative policy – displaying a systematic review of Normative Power Europe.

1. Ideational Factors: What ideational factors affect the EU-China relations? What is the content of Normative Power Europe towards China?

This question mainly addresses the problem of definition and scope in this research. As previously discussed, ideational factors can range from peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights to social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance. In EU-China relations, are these factors all present or equally addressed? In this part, a discourse analysis of the notion of “Normative Power Europe”, starting with the early debate between “Civilian Power Europe” and “Military Power Europe” would also be developed in the form of literature review on the discussion of NPE and its impact on Europe's foreign policy.

## 2. A normative convergence toward China in EU's Policy?

The asymmetrical nature of the EU's foreign policy process across member states and institutions is well documented. There is significant variation within the policy towards China owing to the different political, economic and social features of the individual member states. Thus, the question would be: is the interaction of ideational motives within the European foreign policy-making system leading to a normative convergence toward China? If so why? If not, then why not? This question attempts to explain the notable phenomenon that EU member states' commitments to pursuing a normative foreign policy toward China varied significantly.

I assume that there are two crucial independent variables that influence the degree of pursuing a common normative policy.

The first one is about the size or power of the Member State. According to liberal-intergovernmentalist arguments, the frequency and intensity of the clash between self-interest and promoting European norms is often proportional to a state's power. As small states in Europe have fewer and less complicated relations with China, their normative initiatives are less likely to conflict with their strategic or economic interests in China. On the contrary, large states like France and Germany have more complex interests in China, which will often conflict with assertive normative policy. The measurement of the actors' political and economic power would be based on a systematic assessment of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), its percentage of trade volume with China out of its total foreign trade volume, as well as empirical observations of its political influence both within the EU and the international arena.

While from a constructivist view, domestic political culture is another independent variable. For example, Nordic countries and Netherlands are welfare states, which share a social democratic tradition, whose attachment to norms such as peace-keeping and human rights are stronger than average European level. When their political tradition are

reflected in foreign policy, it's not strange for them to have spoken out vigorously on normative issues while their goals are not always shared by other Member States with different domestic political culture. The measurement of this variable brings about another big project of political culture studies. An earlier research on political culture conceptualized it broadly as "the important ways in which people are subjectively oriented toward the basic elements of their political system" (Rosenbaum, 1975). Generally speaking, political culture research focuses on the nation-state, comparing how citizens or institutions of states vary in their political norms and most studies were based on national or cross-national sample surveys and operationally defined culture in terms of the political beliefs, values, attitudes and opinions of mass publics. There exists a rich literature on political culture of the EU in a regional level and its member states in a national level and a great many aspects are covered. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this research, we mainly focus on the impact of different political cultures on shaping state policies and politics. More specifically this research tends to group political actors into two categories: those with a "thicker" democratic or liberal political culture and those with less "density" of democratic or liberal norms. The criteria in grouping mainly apply that used by the International Social Survey Program and European Social Survey.

Accordingly, my hypotheses are as follows:

*Hypothesis 1: The larger the political power and economic size an EU member state has, the more likely that it will pursue an assertive common normative policy towards China.*

*Hypothesis 2: A "thicker" or more influencing democratic or liberal political culture an EU member state has, the more unlikely that it will pursue an assertive common normative policy towards China.*

These two hypotheses would be tested by cases studies in EU-China relations. I have selected four cases: two in high politics, i.e. arms embargo and the promotion of human rights and the rule of law, and two in low politics, i.e., the promotion of relevant norms in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the EU's Raw Material Diplomacy. These

four cases have covered the major frictions in the EU-China relations and through the combination of both high and low politics issues we can examine the influence of another possible independent variable: the nature of the issue. I assume that a convergence in a common normative policy is more likely to exist in low politics issues while less likely to exist in high politics issues.

3. China's Perception: Is Europe a normative actor in international relations? The question is not only based on the perception within Europe, but also depends on the perception from China. Therefore the question would be: how do Chinese officials and scholars perceive these ideational factors? Do they see EU as a normative power?

This part starts with reviewing current empirical studies on the effects of ideational factors in EU-China relations and proceeds with tracing the process of our four cases by focusing on the reaction of China.

#### **1.4 Data Collection and Method of Analysis**

A case study method and comparative analysis are applied in this research. The main advantages of a case study method in this research include identifying and examining intervening variables in individual cases which may be omitted by the mere definition of NPE, developing historical explanations of particular cases on EU-China relationship, and using contingent generalizations to model complex relationships such as multiple interactions effects in the formation of EU's China policy.

Based on a multilevel approach, Member States are at the centre of the analysis and act on both the national and the European level and pursue their policies on the European level. This bargaining set contains national policy based on policy preferences, basic values, and strategic interest. However, it is rather difficult to include all Member States in each case and make comparison among all. For research simplicity, I investigate the interests and policy preferences towards China of four exemplar Member States: the "big three" (France, the UK, and Germany) and the Netherlands. Firstly, from a liberal

intergovernmental perspective, the “big three” are the Member States with the strongest political leverage and at the same time the most significant economic relations with China. An analysis of the “big three” serves the theoretical purpose of assessing our first hypothesis as their domestic influence, internal interaction and dynamics largely affect the policy outcome of the EU’s foreign policy toward China, though it is not enough to merely assess their cases. Comparison with relatively smaller countries is also necessary to draw a valid conclusion. Therefore the Netherlands is included in the analysis as the fourth exemplar country. Secondly, the Netherlands are among those states with typical liberal political culture. The Nordic countries and the Netherlands are famous for the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Besides, the reputation of the Hague as the centre or “capital” of international justice makes the Netherlands of particular significance. Hence, the analysis of the Dutch policy can examine the second hypothesis.

In the respect of data collecting, extensive investigation of archival and academic materials is necessary. Also, as above mentioned, operationalization of variables would make use of established social research databases. Besides secondary source in both Chinese and English scholarship, relevant sources from EU/China’s official policies statements, speeches of leaders, meetings and conference minutes are also utilized in this research. Moreover, interviews with Chinese scholars and officials in relevant fields serve as favorable supplements to my research.

## Chapter 2 Contextualizing the Study: Literature Review

### 2.1 Theories of the EU's Foreign Policy

Theoretical work on EU integration is characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity, divided along paradigmatic lines between realism, liberalism and various alternative approaches such as constructivism. This part briefly introduces the theoretic background of EU Foreign Policy Analysis. Classical explanations like Federalism and neo-functionalism would be first introduced and the debate among realists, liberals and constructivists will be outlined as well.

In the early stages, federalism, functionalism and neo-functionalism had great impacts on European integration. These three theories differ in some ways but they do share a common idea, i.e., supranational institutions play an important role in the integration. Federalists believe that peace and stability in Europe can only be achieved by the establishment of a European federal state (Mitrany, 1965). Initially, states integrate in limited functional or economic areas; thereafter, partially integrated states experience increasing momentum for further rounds of integration in related areas – this “invisible hand” of integration phenomenon was termed “spill-over” by the neo-functionalist school (McCormick, 1999). Neo-functionalism describes and explains the process of regional integration with reference to how three causal factors interact with one another: growing economic interdependence between nations, organizational capacity to resolve disputes and build international legal regimes, and supranational market rules that replace national regulatory regimes (Haas, 1961). Neo-functionalist theory assumes a decline in importance of nationalism and the nation-state; it predicted that, gradually, elected officials, interest groups, and large commercial interests within states would see it in their interests to pursue welfarist objectives best satisfied by the political and market integration at a higher, supranational level (Haas, 1958). However, so far we have found no support to this assumption: supranational actors do not exist in CFSP or the EU.

Realists are in general skeptical about the progress in political integration. After the

collapse of bipolar structure, John Mearsheimer published his famous work, *Back to the Future*, in which he explains that the US hegemony and balance of power are two main reasons behind European integration in the bipolar era and after the Cold War, the European states would worry about the uneven distribution of interests, which would make cooperation become increasingly difficult (Mearsheimer, 1990). Waltz also predicted the future of European integration after the bipolar system. Though Waltz's view is not as pessimistic as Mearsheimer's, he contended that "it has moved so far toward unity that it can go no farther; the easier steps toward unity come earlier, the harder ones later, and the hardest of all at the end (Waltz, 1993)."

The liberal paradigm is more easily adapted to explain European integration and the emergence of a European CFSP. On the one hand, liberals adopt a more flexible approach than realists on the question of actors in international politics, allowing also for a role of supranational organizations; on the other hand, they are more optimistic on the prospects of interstate cooperation and are therefore more willing to acknowledge the success of the EC and the EU (Andreatta, 2005). The debate has produced the liberal-intergovernmentalist school which believes that governments negotiate at the supranational level only on those issues which are favored by their domestic constituencies, since their primary interest is in being elected (Moravcsik, 1998). Moravcsik uses a three-step process to define his theory: the first step is "domestic preference formation", also called policy demand; the second one is "interstate bargaining", also called policy supply (Moravcsik argues that agreements at this level are the result of asymmetrical interdependence, in other words, the outcomes of international bargaining between states are determined by the preferences and bargaining power of states.); the last step is "supranational institutions", which, once created in Europe, tend to make cooperation more likely for reasons like reduction of negotiation transaction costs or more autonomy of national governments from citizens, achieved by adding legitimacy and credibility to common policies (Moravcsik, 1998).

Nevertheless, constructivists contend that Moravcsik's understanding of the relationship between domestic politics and state interests is simplistic as he is left without an



explanation of where state interests come from. Constructivist accounts offer a way of studying European political integration that is different from that of rationalist theories, in that they see ideas and norms as in part constituting the political realm, rather than being essentially intervening variables as in rationalist accounts. The primary idea of constructivism is that many core aspects of international relations are socially constructed. In other words, they are given their form by ongoing processes of social practice and interaction. Alexander Wendt identifies the two increasingly accepted basic tenets of constructivism: “the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces” and “the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature” (Wendt, 1999). In a nutshell, constructivist approaches emphasize the importance of norms, identity and other cognitive factors.

## **2.2 The Notion of Normative Power Europe**

The notion of NPE could be taken as a re-interpretation of “Civilian power Europe”. In the early 1970s, François Duchêne claimed that traditional military had given way to progressive civilian power as the means to exert influence on international affairs while Europe can only be represented as a “civilian power” which was long on economic power and relatively short on armed force. Furthermore, he is also interested in the normative power of EC as an “idea force” (Duchêne, 1972). It was not until Ian Manners’s article on normative power published in 2002 that the academic debate got rolling again. He proposes a collective identity for the Union as a “normative power”, which seeks to avoid the civilian/military dichotomy in favor of a focus upon the “ideational impact of the EU’s international identity/role” (Manners, 2002). Normative power thus both encompasses and complements the Union’s civilian power and “fledgling military power” through an ideational dimension which potentially provides the “ability to shape conceptions of ‘normal’ in international relations” (Manners, 2002). The EU collective identity proposed by Manners emanates from three sources: its genesis as an explicit rejection of the divisive nationalisms, imperialism and war of Europe’s past; its unique character as a “hybrid polity”; and the development, over the past 50 years, of a body of

values which are firmly embedded in successive Treaties and in the Union's practices (Manners, 2002). By examining the case study of EU's international pursuit of the abolition of death penalty, which ended up with an emergence as a global standard, Manners gave a best illumination of NPE. Manners started with the assumption that the specificity of the European Union based on post-Westphalian norms, in other words to shift the focus for assessing and interpreting Europe's role beyond the usual focus on means of power. Manners considers this preference on norms as respect to the principles on which the political integration of Europe has been based since 1950. He identifies five core values – peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights – and four subsidiary values – social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance – as contributing to the Union's presence (Manners, 2002). It is in projecting these values, and promoting the establishment of related norms for the governance of international behavior, that the EU might be said to exercise normative power (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006).

Undoubtedly, the Union's proclaimed values feature frequently in documentation and in the rhetoric of EU representatives. Those core values which the Union claims to observe and seeks to project makes the implicit identity statements based upon its difference from and superiority over other global actors, most notably the US (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006). Charles Kupchan has noted the practices of EU representatives in constructing a value-based identity distinct from that of the US and he cites differences with the US over the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, the International Criminal Court and the death penalty as evidences of EU "resistance" to US leadership (Kupchan, 2002). Thus, the question would be: are the Union's attempts to assert and project its values and to shape the practices of the third parties evident and dominant in EU's foreign policy?

A recent empirical study carried out by Tocci on the EU's foreign policy and that of its main global partners including China, aims clarify the under-specified literature on EU normative foreign policy dominated by Ian Manners' conceptualization of Normative Power Europe. Tocci claimed that the European Union is itself a new or emerging foreign policy actor, driven by self-declared normative principles, while China, Russia and India

are also increasingly assertive actors on the global stage and similarly claim to be driven by a normative agenda (Tocci, 2007). Balducci pointed out the majority of Tocci's literature presents two major shortcomings. First, it tends to merely analyze EU foreign policy leaving aside the foreign policies of the member states, uncritically assuming that they are in line with those of the EU; second, it tends to reify the EU and to conceive it as a single international actor (Balducci, 2008). Therefore, it is necessary to examine the normative convergence within the EU in terms of important foreign relations such as EU-China relations.

### **2.3 Issues in EU-China Relations**

The current reality is that the alleged EU-China strategic partnership has encountered a number of difficulties. Though some critical issues, such as Taiwan, are not causing major friction, other normative factors have a significant impact on the relationship. The human rights issue is an obvious example.

The influence of human rights issues in China-EU relationship is significant because of its normative nature. The German Chancellor's approach to this issue, through direct meetings with the Dalai Lama, has greatly constrained Sino-German relations (Xiang, 2009). The French approach of accommodation will face increasing pressure from other EU member states. Starting from the year 1990, the EU and its member states had followed the practice of tabling or sponsoring resolutions critical of China at the annual meetings of the UN Commission for Human Rights (Baker, 2002). On the first Commission Communication on China of 1995, EU and its members put main policies and instruments to constructively engage China and promote human rights in China. The Communication also marked the beginning of a "division of labor" between the CFSP, in charge of pursuing a critical stance towards China, and the EC, responsible to apply positive conditionality to the country (Möller, 2002). Since 1997, EU-China cooperation on Chinese legal reform has been considered the more practical approach to promoting political changes; however this new approach to the human rights situation in China has been criticized by large segments of the public in Europe (Xiang, 2009). After 1998 all

EU member states abandoned the tabling of resolutions at the UNCHR since membership of the Union and the Unionization of the member states' human rights foreign policy had watered down the commitment of the more radical member states (Andrew, 1999).

The arms embargo has also been portrayed by EU and its member states as another issue where unanimity exists. After Tiananmen incident, France developed a non-official relationship with Taipei to whom it sold a large amount of weapons and China retaliated by excluding French companies from the Chinese market and closing the French Consulate in Guangzhou in 1992. In response, the French Government capitulated in January 1994 and signed an agreement that not only banned France from selling more arms to Taiwan but also offered recognition of China's sovereignty over the island (Xiang, 2009). In the latter half of the 1990s, although EU governments held inconclusive consultations on the eventual termination of the arms embargo, MEPs (Member of the European Parliament) demanded a peaceful solution of the Taiwan issue in 1997 after Taiwan Strait crisis and maintained the arms embargo to Beijing. In 2003, pushing for acquiescing at Chinese requests, Germany and France proposed the lifting of the arms embargo on European Council held in Brussels, motivating it on the basis of China's improvements in the respect of human rights since Tiananmen incident (Niccola, 2006). Nevertheless, the suggestion of lifting the arms embargo on China has incurred strong opposition even in France. In the end, EU decided to postpone the lifting of the arms embargo due to international (America) and internal (Nordic countries) pressures. The adoption by China of an Anti-Secession Law aimed at Taiwan in March 2005 convinced most EU members to postpone any decision on this issue. German Chancellor Merkel opposed any lifting of the embargo and as befits a typical East German politician, seems very keen in making direct linkages between human rights issues and the arms embargo (Xiang, 2009). By examining the cases of arm embargo on China, Kreutz highlighted the clash between norms and rationale within EU's security strategy (Kreutz, 2004).

Besides the high politics issues above, some fresh disputes with respect to international issues of low politics nature are also brewing. For example, China is still quite slow in heeding the world's public opinion on the dangers of global warming. China's record of

pollution at home and the failure of the EU to convince China to accept stricter greenhouse gas emission regulations have also frustrated EU member states. Environmental protection is also part of the CSR concept which the EU has been actively promoting internationally, especially in newly emerging powers such as China. A lot of international standards and norms are initiated by European countries; for instance the EITI was first brought by the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Another lately discussed issue is the EU's Communication on the Raw Materials Initiative (RMI) as the EU is highly dependent on imports of raw materials for its industry. The dependency rate for minerals ranges from 48% for copper ore and 78% for nickel to 100% for materials such as cobalt, platinum, and titanium (Gregow, 2011). Due to this import dependency, the EU's raw materials strategy places particular attention on fighting export restrictions, including export taxes, bans and regulated exports. In 2008, the EC presented its RMI and has since then worked to implement it. In February 2011, an update on the RMI titled "Tackling the challenges in Commodity markets and on raw materials" was presented to the public, setting the stage for future actions.

The aim and measures of the initiative and the integrated approach it takes in regard to resource policies are placed in a sustainable development context and reflects one of the four subsidiary values previously mentioned. The EU sees itself to be highly dependent on imports from China, as it accounted for 97% of the world production in 2009 (Sydow, 2011); yet the means the EU wants to apply in order to take part in this distributive conflict are highly hypercritical. Instead of starting a global dialogue and negotiating for binding rules and regulation in a level playing field, the EU is actually using means and methods it also criticizes other countries for, especially China; thus civil society and affected communities especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America have to pay the costs for this global race (Sydow, 2011). The RMI mentions the aim of promoting the application of EU standards by EU companies operating in the developing countries, which indicates that compliance with these standards and principles could then be on the agenda of EU-China trade relations.

The former director-general of the EC's trade department, Mogens Peter Carl, pointed out

that “China restricts its exports but allows local companies to use and transform them into finished products – that’s what the conflict is about (Hoffmeister, 2011)”. In October 2010, German companies complained that “they were being pressured by Beijing to boost their investment in China if they wanted to secure access to rare earth minerals (Hoffmeister, 2011)”. Worse still, the conflict is growing further and further in consequence of the growing global demand and competition with China as well as other new emerging economies such as India, Brazil, Russia who aim for rapid industrialization and development will make the conflict difficult to tackle. Thus, the so-called low politics issues are actually bringing fiercer political debates both in bilateral relationship and in international stage.

## Chapter 3 Cases Studies on the EU's Foreign Policy Towards China

### 3.1 Arms Embargo

The killing of protesters in the Tiananmen Square Event in 1989 provoked international outrage and many countries adopted sanctions against China afterwards, which included an arms embargo. The EU's collective declaration that "in the present circumstances the European Council thinks it necessary to adopt the following measures...interruption by the member states of the community of military cooperation and an embargo on trade in arms with China (Madrid European Council, 1989)" has established an embargo yet it actually did not have any legally binding effect. Nevertheless, since this declaration was made, the arms embargo has become a symbolic message delivering the EU's values in human rights and democracy. Different pursuit and interpretation of national interests and priorities in foreign policies resulted in a non-decision in lifting the embargo although campaigns calling for lifting the embargo were initiated several times over the past years. Could we see the failure of lifting the embargo as the victory of the European values such as human rights and democracy in this case? I will examine the attitude and decisions of the four countries, i.e., France, Germany, the UK and the Netherlands, in the arms embargo case to examine the role of ideational factors in decision making.

The division within the EU could be simply regarded as a debate between the "pro-lifting" camp led by France and the "anti-lifting camp" led by the Netherlands and the Nordic countries. The four typical EU member states selected above have very different strategic paradigms, structure and orientation of their defense industries and their individual interpretations of the arms embargo in the debate, which can provide a relatively comprehensive reflection of factors affecting the final decision-making.

#### *France*

France's call for lifting was actually a top-down decision made by the then President Jacques Chirac. Although France was one of the most vocal countries in criticizing the

Chinese government after the Tiananmen event, just as our hypothesis explains, strategic and economic calculations would prioritize ideational factors like human rights performance. In fact, France is the country that, among the EU Member States, interprets the arms embargo most narrowly. “From a French perspective, the arms embargo covered lethal weapons and major weapons platforms, while it allowed the export of non-lethal systems and dual-use items such as electronics for ships and aircrafts, non-combat platforms, optoelectronic devices, transmitters, radars etc (Stumbaum, 2009).” Moreover, it is France that has been the biggest European arms exporter to China, “accounting for roughly 65 per cent of all EU arms sales to China since the imposition of the embargo (Stumbaum, 2009)”. Obviously, if a lifting of the embargo would be successful, it would be more economically beneficial to France compared to other Member State. The French industry would then greatly profit from export of high tech products and grand contracts with China. Besides, taking international competition into consideration, it could be observed that France was competing with the US in arms sales and more or less it felt necessary to get rid of the restrictions of an EU black list. Lifting the arms embargo in China would ensure an increase in arms sales: “French defense companies initially shared their visions of increasing their share of Chinese defense market; in particular, the companies hoped to win ‘grand contracts’ for civilian products such as satellites, telecommunication systems, nuclear power plants and high speed rail system (Stumbaum, 2009).”

On top of economic interests, France also had other reasons to campaign for a lifting, for example, France’s promotions of a “multipolar world”. France has long been supporting the strategic partnership with China and a stronger China would balance the US. Thus, it is the France’s strategic calculation to strengthen China and build the multipolar international system. Therefore, among the EU Member State, France was the one that has been most in favor of lifting the arms embargo in China. Publicly, France called the embargo “discriminating” and outdated in times when the EU was entertaining a strategic partnership with China (Stumbaum, 2009).

Yet, we should also notice that President’s top-down decision was not widely welcomed



domestically. In 2004, to show their opposition and un-satisfaction of China's human rights performance, "almost half of the French National Assembly members refused to attend the official speech by the Chinese President Hu Jintao (Gupta, 2004)". In other words, human rights performance remained a big concern for French politicians or ideational factor did affect politicians' decisions but limitedly.

### *The UK*

Based on our hypothesis and analysis of the French case, it would be reasonable that countries with stronger political and economic power should be in the pro-lifting camp. However, this is not exactly the case for the UK, although for strategic and commercial reasons the UK should do so. This is why at the very beginning the UK had supported, though cautiously, the France's decision to lift the arms embargo but in the end the UK did not agree the actual lifting, preferring to update the embargo instead.

In terms of strategic concerns, it is undeniable that the UK generally supports a "unipolar world" where the US and the EU working hand in hand with each other and accordingly contain China. However, improving relations with China is also vital to the UK as long as it seeks "to further the British commercial interest in the PRC, while also promoting the political objectives of integrating China into the world's community more closely" (Stumbaum, 2009). Hence, in 1998 – a year after the peaceful handover of Hong Kong – British diplomats had argued in an internal paper that "Britain would do well to lift the embargo for commercial reasons and for the advancement of the overall relationship" (Stumbaum, 2009). In other words, just like France, the UK is also afraid that opposing the lifting would harm its defense industry and non-defense-related commerce. Yet, unlike France, the UK cannot strongly support the lifting since it is restricted by its alliance relationship with the US. The UK's non-wavering loyalty to the USA has decided that the UK cannot easily play a high profile role like the France did in the lifting campaign.

In the UK case, we can identify another influential element that decides foreign policy

choices on top of commercial and strategic interests – external actors. When the British government was facing the pressure from both domestically and the US, it became difficult for the UK to prioritize economic interests, which explains the UK's unsettling position in the debate.

### *Germany*

During the debate, the then German chancellor Gerhard Schröder supported the lifting as it is also of the Germany's interests to integrate China into the international community and develop strategic partnership with China. In fact, Germany had been working towards a European foreign policy that engages China. "After Germany had made good experiences in cooperating with China in international organizations, Schröder teamed up with the French president Chirac in order to reward China with an 'honorary declaration'(Ehrenerklärung) by removing the 'discriminatory' embargo (Stumbaum, 2009)."

In terms of arms business, Schröder was promoting "package deals" where "companies such as the European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company could sell civilian aircrafts (Airbus) and also military helicopters (Eurocopter) in a combined deal (Stumbaum, 2009)." The focus was more on non-defense products since the EU arms embargo was implemented by Germany's national law and thus defense-related business has been strictly restricted by German arms export rules. In addition to pure commercial interests, Schröder also had to support the lifting to gain China's support in the UN. Germany was at that time hoping for a permanent seat at the Security Council. Without China's support this would be impossible. Given all these into accounts, Schröder supported the lifting without any human rights situation improvement in return.

Unfortunately, Chancellor's stance was not supported by the government and the parliamentary majority due to human rights controversies. It also seemed that the call for multi-polarity by Schröder was not generally accepted by domestic politicians either. Basically, the conservatives worried about the already subtle relationship with the US and

the human rights conscious parties insisted that policy change could only be made until China made gestures in improving its human rights situation.

### *The Netherlands*

The Dutch were also facing the same concerns with the “big three”, such as jeopardizing the trading relations with China; and therefore the then Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende announced that the Netherlands was not against the decision to update the arms embargo. However, being a country with long-term liberal traditions in defending human rights and international justice, the government had to make political compromise under pressure of domestic and international lobby groups. For example, international civil society based in The Hague pressed the Dutch government to urge China to improve its human rights situation in exchange for Dutch decision to lift the embargo. The UNPO, for instance, claimed that “the human rights situation in China should have the full attention of the Dutch government (UNPO, 2004).”

As a result, for the Dutch politicians pressure did not only come from the parliament or domestic lobby groups active in liberal norms promotion, but also from international civil society since a lot of them are based in the Hague. Constrained by these parties, the Netherland had no choice but to maintain the embargo.

### Conclusion

By the end of 2004, after numerous debates and swings from side to side the Council finally declared that it would lift the embargo. Nevertheless, when it seemed that Member States in the pro-lifting camp were winning, internal and external pressure postponed the decision in 2005. This time, concerns more or less surrounded the security issues as in the year of 2005 China passed the “anti-secession law” which stated that military means would be taken if Taiwan declared formal independence. Consequently the US increased pressure on the EU and the EU itself felt the “China threat” more concretely. Thus, eventually the dual force of internal opposition and external factors made the debates end

up with a *de facto* non-decision in lifting. Interestingly, not long after the postponement, the EU made an gesture closely linking lifting to China's improvement in human rights performance that "the EU and its member states reached a common position on the lifting of the arms embargo towards China, which was linked to the Chinese compliance with four main requirements: (i) the need for Chinese authorities to release citizens imprisoned in connection with the suppression of the 1989 pro-democracy movement; (ii) the need to ease media censorship; (iii) the need for reform of China's 'Re-education through Labor' system; and (iv) the need for the PRC to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Balducci, 2010)." Although it looks like that all Member States expressed their claims in terms of human rights, the truth was that Member States "positions on the China issue in particular do not seem to emerge from socialization into the EU's norms (Erickson, 2011)".

A closer look at different concerns of the four countries in the whole debate has revealed the conflicting strategic interests the EU faced. Clinging to normative values such as human rights might harm commercial benefits while improving relations with China might cause tension with the US. From the analysis above we can observe that the motives for lifting the embargo were actually the same among the Member States: commercial considerations and the strategic partnership relationship with China. While human rights controversies were definitely the common reason against lifting, external actors such as the US and international organizations were also playing important roles.

The final non-decision on the lifting reflected the different calculations of foreign policy priorities. The gap among the EU Member States regarding economic and strategic interests determines that the EU is far from having a common European strategy to exert normative power internationally. Nevertheless, ideational factors did play a significant role in shaping the foreign policy, which can be seen the strong lobby groups in the parliament from political parties and other social groups in the Netherlands case.

### **3.2 Human Rights and the Rule of Law**

From the debates about whether to lift the arms embargo or not we can actually observe that human rights can be seen as signaling a value-oriented EU policy. Opponents of the lifting might have security concerns such as modifying the security scenario in East Asia, with particular reference to Taiwan or they are afraid of a stronger China in military power; yet direct causes go to the grave human rights situation in China.

“Human rights must be at the core of all EU foreign policy (Commission’s China Strategy Paper, 1995).” It is also written in the official document that “to support China’s transition to an open society based upon the rule of law and respect for human rights (Delegation of the European Union to China, 2012)” is one of the four aspects of the EU’s China policy. In practice, the EU’s human rights policy is driven by a combination of the EU institutions and the Member States. At the supranational level, we have the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and the European Parliament (EP) while at the national level we have Member States strengthening the EU’s legitimacy in promoting human rights and the rule of law internationally.

China, an authoritarian state in the eyes of most Westerners, has long been criticized by the Europeans for its human rights abuses. Thus, the question would be whether the EU, which put human rights “at the core of all EU foreign policy”, would prioritize human rights over other interests and “speak with one voice”? In this case study, we look at the attitude of the selected EU Member States in the engagement between China and the EU in human rights disputes as well as the tools or instruments they apply in the promotion of human rights and the rule of law. The first obviously attempts to examine the role of normative factors in foreign policy decisions and the latter finds out the capability of the EU and its Member States in realizing its value-oriented policy.

### *France*

There is something special about France-China relationship thanks to the fact that De Gaulle was the first European leader to recognize China. However, there existed clear inconsistency in French policy towards China. For example, “France provided refuge to

many Chinese dissidents after the Tiananmen crack-down”, and “it was also the first unilaterally to breach EEC sanctions only six months later, in December 1989, opting to ‘change China through engagement’ and support blossoming business relations (Casarini and Musu, 2007).” In other words, the initial harsh decision against China was soon diluted by realist calculation in foreign policy making. As reflected in the arms embargo case, Chirac inherited the tradition of De Gaulle and during his leadership a “Comprehensive Partnership Agreement” was established (Joint Sino-French Declaration, 1997). Trade deals in areas like nuclear energy, aircrafts, and social services were signed accordingly and obviously these profitable deals enhanced the bilateral relationship. Against this background, it is without doubt that Chirac applied an accommodating approach to China’s human rights performance. Furthermore, when Denmark motioned for a UN Resolution condemning China for human rights abuse following an internal agreement in the EU, France blocked it in order to facilitate a profitable Airbus deal, which was also supported by Spain, Italy, Greece and Germany (Schubert, 2002).

In terms of aid programmes which are usually instruments for the promotion of human rights and rule of law, France concentrated more on training and academic exchange projects that were not sensitive at all compared to aggressive civil society activities. Such an approach had definitely diluted France’s capability of changing China’s human right situation. No wonder it is argued that France is “one of the Western governments least enthused by the democracy promotion agenda (Youngs, 2006)”.

It is expected that France would at least come up with a low-key approach to human rights and the rule of law, public shaming or condemn would jeopardize Sino-French partnership. Yet, “as indicated in the ‘Comprehensive Partnership Agreement’, France pointed to the EU as the most suitable level to discuss the human rights issue with China (Balducci, 2010)”, instead of making efforts to build a formal bilateral dialogue to tackle human rights issues. In other words, France placed the responsibilities of exerting pressure on China to the EU and hoped that the EU could come up with a normative foreign policy. It was only in very few occasions that the presidency made statements concerning several political refugees and the request for freedom of speech and other

civil rights.

The attitude to untie hands from such a burden to maintain public pressure on China's human rights situation was also copied by Italy, Spain and other Mediterranean Member States where the liberal democratic tradition was not deeply rooted in their political culture. For them, delegating the responsibilities to the EU is a smart alternative to avoid direct confrontation with China.

### *The UK*

“The overall UK foreign policy would be characterized by a mixture of idealism and pragmatism, pursued through a combination of hard and soft power (Balducci, 2010)”. The then Secretary of State Robin Cook announced in his speech that the foreign policy of the UK would have an “ethical dimension” with “human rights at its heart” (House of Commons, 1999). Yet in practice the ethical dimension was not well addressed. The UK maintained a wavering or ambiguous position on human rights issues regarding China, just as reflected in the arms embargo case. Nevertheless, in practice the UK did establish its human rights dialogue with China and relevant projects in the promotion of human rights and the rule of law were also initiated.

A year after Chirac signed the Partnership Agreement with China, a Joint Declaration on a “Comprehensive Partnership Agreement” was also signed by the UK and China (Sino-British Comprehensive Partnership Agreement). With the Sino-British partnership, closer economic and trade relations were established. Five years after the signing of this “Comprehensive Partnership Agreement”, the two parties enhanced their cooperation and signed a “Sino-British Joint Declaration on a Strategic Partnership”, which aimed at “further high-level political dialogues and consultations on sustainable development, strategic security, development and non-proliferation (Sino-British Strategic Partnership Agreement, 2004).” Under such bilateral strategic partnership, we can see that little of the political objectives in human rights promotion have been translated into concrete actions. This was due to the fierce competition for Chinese markets the UK faced among its

European counterparts, notably France and Germany.

The actual promotion of human rights and the rule of law had been in fact left to public organizations such as the Great Britain-China Centre and the British Council which carried out projects with limited funding in mainly five fields: “abolition of death penalty, combating torture, freedom of expression, the rule of law and children’s rights (Balducci, 2010).” For example, both the Great Britain-China Centre and the British Council had set up training schemes of lawyers and judges. Although these efforts showed the UK’s commitment to its foreign policy goals in terms of “ethical dimension”, the fact that UK’s ODA to China spread among other fields proved that the initial ethical foreign policy failed or shifted in practice.

In sum, it can be observed that the UK’s promotion in human rights was limited in a few projects operated by public organizations as the government had to take a pragmatic approach when its economic competitors were realists in engaging China. The idealism in the UK’s foreign policy thus suffered.

### *Germany*

Germany surpassed other Member States in trade and direct investments volume in China. Thus, it is particularly essential for Germany to strengthen political and economic relationship with China. Thus, Germany does not only conduct its foreign policy at the EU level but also independently organizes its projects with specific countries. Similar to the UK, Germany focused more on bilateral human rights dialogues. In engaging with China, Germany, especially in Schröder’s time, adopted a very realistic approach that merely criticized China mildly. In practice, it put a lot of efforts in lawyers- training programmes that could promote the rule of law in concrete means. “The German government’s most-preferred instrument for the promotion of human rights and the rule of law in China was development assistance, in particular technical cooperation in the judicial and legal field” and “it is within the technical assistance offered through grants and managed by GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) that



Germany carried out several projects in the legal and judicial field (Balducci, 2010).” Yet it is important to realize the fact that these projects had no pure human rights dimension; instead, it focused a lot in business sectors that were profitable.

Although the leadership supports such a positive and pragmatic way and prioritize business interests over normative factors, we should bear in mind that public opinion is highly critical towards China’s human rights violations. In recent years, Chinese dissidents or human rights activists have caught increasing international attention and the leadership has to make their open criticism towards China when faced with pressure from domestic audience. It is just that the vocal criticism did not change the *de facto* policy implementation. In general, we can conclude that Germany avoids confronting China in tackling human rights issues and devote itself to pragmatic promotion of civil rights and rule of law in concrete trade projects.

### *The Netherlands*

Just like the “big three,” promoting economic and political relations with China is also the key objective of Dutch foreign policy. However, the Dutch government can never get around the human rights situation in China. Actually, “the Netherlands as well as the Scandinavian countries included human rights promotion in their foreign policies in the 1970s (Balducci, 2010)”. In the memorandum presented to the Lower House of the States General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Development Co-operation on 3 May 1979, it said “active involvement in the human rights situation stems from one of the main principles of Dutch foreign policy: solidarity with the people in the rest of the world (Human Rights and Foreign Policy, 1979).” Besides, the principle of non-selectivity determines that the Netherlands has to take the initiative in dealing with human rights violations in a great power like China whereas other countries like the UK give priority to less powerful countries with lower political risks. Just as Baehr argued, “nobody will speak out against a powerful country like China, if the Netherlands and other like-minded countries do not do it (Baehr, 2002)”. On top of these guidelines, it is special for the Netherlands that there is a strong and

aggressive Tibetan and Taiwanese lobby group based in The Hague which urges the Dutch politicians to address the human rights violations in China, just as what the UNPO and the Tibet Support Group did in the arms embargo issue.

In 1989, the Dutch government took the initiative for the resolution on China at the 44<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly dealing with the human rights violations. The then minister of foreign affairs Hans van den Broek openly and forcefully rejected China's statement that "it would be an unlawful interference in internal affairs to deal with human rights abuses in other countries (Baehr, 2002)". As known to all, these motions by the Netherlands and other western countries failed in the Commission. Yet the Dutch did not give up and several years later it made another attempt for the EU resolution at the UN Commission of Human Rights. As shown in the Dutch delegate's message "blatant disregard for the work of the Human Rights Commission was not good for a super power and permanent member of the Security Council" (Baehr, 2002), the Dutch were not at all hesitating to be very clear and direct. When France, Germany, Italy and Spain withdrew their support for the Resolution, the Dutch were definitely furious as the then Minister Hans van Mierlo wrote in a letter to his EU partner that he was "not any longer prepared to introduce a resolution on behalf of the EU" and "if the EU was not prepared to introduce a resolution on human rights violations in an important country such as China, but would go along with introducing resolutions regarding violations in smaller countries such as Burma, Zaire and Iran, a selective approach using double standards would be the result and the EU would lose its credibility" (Baehr, 2002).

Although as previously discussed, these two resolutions were abandoned due to the opposition of the powerful EU countries, they have at least proven the Dutch involvement in human rights issues. In addition to efforts with in multilateral framework, the Netherlands has also established human rights dialogue with China, "including an official dialogue on human rights issues in general and specific cases in China, a legal seminar and a cooperation programme with the European Commission (Baehr, 2002)". Those bilateral activities were designed not only to engage China in a constructive approach but also to fix the relationship between China and the Netherlands since the Netherland's

firm position in the human rights issues was blamed by China afterwards and thus brought negative influence on their diplomatic relationship. Realizing the consequences, the Dutch have adopted relatively pragmatic approaches such as dialogues and cooperation programmes to strengthen economic and political relations.

## Conclusion

The debates and divergences in human rights policy towards China reflect the fact that socialization is not yet forming among the EU Member States. Instead, commercial and investment competition forces them to put the promotion of human rights and the rule of law aside despite of the fact that these countries all place human rights and the rule of law at the core of their foreign policy objectives. Consequently, these countries could only undertake non-confrontational economic or social projects. Even countries like the Netherlands with strong liberal political culture that is most vocal in human rights promotion has turned to mild approaches when faced with pressure from the Chinese government. Also adopting the strategy of engagement instead of confrontation, the EU set up a bilateral human rights dialogue with China in 1996. In addition, promoting good governance and the rule of law through an EU-China Civil Society Co-operation Programme is part of the plan to improve the overall situation.

However, all these dialogues are facing more or less similar difficulties: “the very rigid format of the sessions, absence of high-level participants on the Chinese side, Chinese evasiveness when questioned on concrete issues, deficiency of follow-up actions, and the lack of any clear progress made on the field following up on the declarations made in the meetings (Barysch, 2005).” Hence, the EU and its Member State’s promotion of human rights and rule of law in China through dialogues and development programmes has not been successful at all.

Also quite interestingly, we can observe a tendency of leaving human rights issues to the EU institutions among the major countries such as the “big three”, Spain and Italy. In the past years, the European Parliament has been seizing opportunities to make rhetorical

criticism on human rights issues as well as addressing the public discontent. The EP is after all a powerless institute and by doing so it can at least promote its profile in the public. In other words, the EP is making use of the critical aspects of the EU's foreign relations i.e. the human rights issue. For example, "after the 2003 summit, European Parliamentarians expressed their disappointment over the failure to mention Tibet and the ongoing human rights abuses there in the joint press statement issued after the conclusion of the six EU-China Summit held in Beijing" (Casarini and Musu, 2007).

In sum, the "big three" prefer to deal with the human rights issue bilaterally or simply leave it to the EU level while smaller States with active human rights promotion could not accumulate their power and translate it into a coherent European policy. As argued by May-Britt Stumbaum, the EU institutions have to "bow to pressures exerted by both China and individual Member States" and "the European Parliament taking the opportunity to sharpen its profile in an area in which it has no competence" (Stumbaum, 2007)

### **3.3 Promotion of CSR-related Norms**

CSR has been a hot issue in political discussions and Europe is perhaps the most vibrant region for CSR development. In the 2000 Lisbon Strategy, the EU set the development goal as making it as "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and great social cohesion (European Council, Lisbon, 23-24 March 2000)." In terms of normative expectations, CSR transcends the boundaries of countries and regions. For example, EC policy on CSR is of relevance not just within the boundaries of the EU but also for EU corporations that operate within China or elsewhere in the developing world (Buhmann, 2005). The concept of CSR has been embraced by the EU for many strategic reasons and the promotion of CSR reflects the need to defend common values and increase the sense of solidarity and cohesion (European Commission, 2006).

Criticism towards China and Chinese enterprises in CSR performance is well

documented. The promotion of CRS in China is operated by a wide range of actors such as national states, multilateral organizations, and NGOs. Here we look at the four countries' policy as well as the Union's projects in China with a CSR focus and their efforts in coming up with common EU actions or participation at the EU level.

### *France*

France is “first country to make public company reporting mandatory (Doucin, 2009)” and “the country's national strategy for sustainable development makes direct reference to CSR” (Riess and Welzel, 2006). The range of CSR issues in French standard has now become one the most comprehensive in Europe. In a word, domestically the France is among the most successful countries in implementing CSR norms and the government mandates CSR by its national law.

Yet in terms of activities abroad, France cannot be seen as a successful frontrunner – “when it comes to sustainability, in France responsibility for international activities is seen less as a matter of CSR and more as an aspect of government development policy (Riess and Welzel, 2006).” France's commitment to the protection for the environment and social and economic development was “to draw up a national sustainable development strategy (France Diplomatie, 2008)”. Actually, under the theme of “sustainable development” on the official website of French Foreign Ministry, we can find out that France's action to foster sustainable development on the international front was more or less through existing multilateral framework such as the UN, with a heavy focus on environment issues alone.

Bilaterally, Sino-French cooperation is deployed in many directions, but also with a French flavor as previously explained – a special focus on environmental issues and educational programmes, including the environment and urban planning, such as the “establishment of climate and sustainable urban development agreements of 2007, and a ‘50 urban planners’ scholarship programme in 2009 (France Diplomatie, 2010)”.

## *The UK*

The UK is perhaps one of the few countries with the best performance in CSR practice. The British government has made a significant contribution. As it officially states, “The Government sees CRS as the business contribution to our sustainable development goals. The base level of responsible behavior for any organization is legal compliance and the Government has a role to play in setting standards in areas such as environmental protection, health and safety and employment rights. The Government can also provide a policy and institutional framework that stimulates companies to raise their performance voluntarily beyond minimum legal standards. Our approach is to encourage and incentives the adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility, through best practice guidance, and, where appropriate, intelligent, i.e. soft-law regulation and fiscal incentives (Steurer, 2010)”.

The UK’s high level of professionalism in CSR performance is not merely reflected in the governmental level, but also in the corporate sector and civil society level. Big enterprises that are pioneers in raising CSR awareness and famous international organizations active actors in relevant fields such as Amnesty International (AI) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) are all good examples. The contribution from bottom-up can also guarantee that the governmental policies stay highly effective and robust. Furthermore, “the creation of a ministerial post for CSR, the only one worldwide, demonstrates that CSR is taken very seriously in the UK (Riess and Welzel, 2006)”.

Different from France, in 2005, the British government “introduced a new kind of policy framework: the International Strategic Framework now defines the government’s goals and priorities for advancing CSR at the national and international level (Riess and Welzel, 2006)”. Internationally the UK has been operating well under multilateral framework such as the UN and the OECD. On top of this, the UK has devoted itself in international civil society development in CSR field. Organizations or think tanks supported by the UK government includes: the Corporate Responsibility Coalition (CORE) established in 2001, the Business in the Community (BITC) – the leading economic initiative in the CSR

domain, the New Economics Foundation (NEF), AccountAbility – an organization specializing in social and ethical reporting, SustainAbility – a consultancy think tank in business risks and opportunities of CSR, Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs) and so forth. Business initiatives that were first raised by the UK and then embraced by the international society, such as the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which will be discussed later, are other highlights of the British contribution to higher standards corporate transparency in resource industry.

In China, the British government has undertaken several CSR projects under its Global Opportunity Fund Programme: including “supporting IBLF (International Business Leaders Forum) to promote transparent business practices, supporting the Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales (AIESEC) to raise CSR awareness among China’s leading youth, training officials in partnership with the China Executive Leadership Academy Pudong (CELAP), and research projects in the Pearl River Delta (Guo, 2008)”.

### *Germany*

In terms of domestic CSR legislation, Germany lags behind its counterparts in Europe, especially the UK and France. “Germany needs to catch up, especially in the areas of strategic development, the financial sector, business activities abroad and public procurement (Riess and Welzel, 2006).” In spite of this sentiment, internationally Germany remains a competitive actor in CSR performance.

Initially, Germany’s involvement at the European and international level could be seen as passive instead of proactive. Yet gradually it started to make active initiatives. In 2003, the UN Secretary-General and the then German Chancellor “invited the executive boards of the German members of the Global Compact (GC) to a gathering at the chancellery in Berlin – an event that went largely unnoticed by the general public” (Riess and Welzel, 2006). The gathering was planned to award the contribution of companies involved and

campaign for more participators from the business sector. This meeting has definitely increased the CSR awareness of Germans through discussion and workshop with counterparts from all over the world.

In regards to German's CSR activities in China, the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) – Society for Technical Cooperation, the organization which coordinates the German GC network on behalf of the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) plays a significant role in CSR promotion.

“German CSR work in China dates back to November 2004 when GTZ organized the first Round Table on Social Standards and CSR, in the scope of a public-private partnership project with the Foreign Trade Association of the German Retail Trade (AVE) (Guo, 2008).” Till 2006, seven roundtables had been held. Also in that year, “GTZ co-founded the China CSR Map which provides an invaluable service to China's CSR community (Guo, 2008).” In April 2007, Sino-German CSR Project was launched by the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China together with GTZ, which was the result of a bilateral agreement signed by both sides. This meaning of this project or the agreement is special as “it is the first bilateral cooperation project to focus exclusively on CSR in China and the core project objectives are to strengthen Chinese government institutions with regard to CSR research and dialogue, initiate public-private partnerships with Chinese enterprises, and promote international exchange on CSR (Guo, 2008).”

### *The Netherlands*

The Dutch Ministry of Economics is most active in CSR promotion, which clearly indicates that CSR is part of the national policy. In 2001, “the Dutch government published two strategy papers on CSR: the first was based on a report by the Dutch Social and Economic Council, a government advisory committee, and the other appeared in the wake of the EU Commission's CSR green paper (Riess and Welzel, 2006).” CSR work in the Netherlands has a special feature thanks to the high level of interaction among business sector, the public sector and the civil society, which is a result of top-down



efforts to promote integration and social cohesion.

Just like the “big thee”, the Dutch adopted various international guidelines and standards. As in developing countries, the Dutch Ministry for Developmental Cooperation “supports fair-trade projects, public-private partnerships and CSR initiatives (Riess and Welzel, 2006).” In terms of bilateral cooperation, the Dutch government has also operated several projects within China. For example, it initiated “a training program to disseminate advanced theories and best practice of CSR in a collaborative project with the China State Information Center (SIC), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and Amsterdam University (Guo, 2008)”. Besides this training program, there were also activities carried out in several remote and less developed provinces such as Heilongjiang, Gansu, Shanxi and Inner Mongolia as well as in the Netherlands from 2008 to 2010.

## Conclusion

Though there are variants in strategies and approaches, the above countries are generally doing well in CSR practice domestically and actively carrying out projects abroad, with China being an important target. At the European level, most activities or projects are supported by “EuropeAid” since 2005. On 12 July 2006, “the EU-China Trade Project has implemented a major EU-China CSR Symposium followed by a series of projects in the textile industry, aiming to support the development of CSR in a labour intensive industry sector that has the potential to act as a model for other labour intensive sectors (Guo, 2008)”. This Symposium was held in the context of a “new policy” launched in March that year by the Union. The “new policy” had several highlights and one of them is “further promoting CSR with an international dimension” (Zourek, 2006). These initiatives indicated that the EU had realized the importance of engaging the outside world and promote CSR abroad instead of merely inside the Union. Before the “EuropeAid” programme, the Commission had External Aid programmes such as the “Small Projects Facility”, which funded several projects over China (European Commission, 2012). These projects were more the comprehensive aid programme kind instead of focusing on CSR alone.

There is no divergence among the EU in coming up with such a common EU action. Apparently there is no major conflict of interests among the Member States in terms of CSR promotion. The notion of sustainability is well received by the European community, not just from top-down level, but also from bottom-up level. The active civil society groups are also advocating for a better European policy in CSR practice.

In addition to the normative driven force, there are also commercial or economic interests involved. The lobby group is not merely from the civil society but also from the business sector. Why are national states so interested in CSR promotion at an international level at all? According to some scholars, “the soft-law character of CSR and CSR policies implies comparatively low political costs in terms of resistance by special interest groups compared to hard-law regulations (Moon, 2002)”. In other words, promotion of norms like sustainability and social responsibility has lower political costs and would not lead to direct confrontation with target countries. An active campaign or promotion in China would not bring any negative influence in the foreign relations. This is of course an important reason, but from another perspective, it is generally accepted that the European states are the ones with much better CSR performance; thus, under a common voluntary regulation or standard, the European cooperate sector membership can easily win over other players. Or more frankly, the promotion of CSR at an international level, or developing countries in particular, can increase the costs of others and thus strengthen self-competitiveness economically. This further explains why it is easy for the EU to come up with a Common Policy in CSR promotion.

Yet it should not be ignored that not all Member States are advanced in CSR performance. As introduced by Heinz Zourek, the Director General for Enterprise and Industry of the Commission, “there are also significant variations between Member States: some member states have sought to promote CSR on a wide scale, and have taken initiatives such as developing a national CSR standard (e.g. Austria), introducing CSR reporting requirements for some companies (e.g. France) and launching national dialogues on CSR (Spain, Germany); in most of the Member States that joined the EU in 2004, however,

CSR is relatively less well advanced, and consumers, civil society and governments are less active in demanding or encouraging it (Zourek, 2006)". This can explain the minor setbacks within the Union in CSR practice. For example, the proposal "to establish a platform for dialogue among the main stakeholder groups at European level: employers' organizations, trade unions, and civil society groups (Zourek, 2006)" failed in 2002.

Consequently, a common EU normative policy is relatively easy to be launched in low politics issues such as the promotion of CSR despite the variations among Member States.

Nevertheless, the variations of development among all the Member States do stay as an obstacle if further proposals were raised. Different national preferences and domestic conditions are sometimes the reasons that stop initiatives from being translated to actual policies. For example, a proactive EU CSR framework was jointly proposed by the Swedish and Spanish leadership in November 2009 that: "Over the recent years the European Union and its member states have recognized CSR as a key element in fostering a truly sustainable economy, building on the Lisbon Strategy and on the recommendations and work of the European parliament and European Commission. Now the time is ripe to take this important work further by developing common frameworks... The responsibility is threefold: the state duty to protect – including legislation as well as implementation of human rights obligations, in particular with regard to business; the corporate responsibility to respect human rights; and the responsibility of all parties to ensure access to adequate remedies to uphold and develop such human rights. (ECCJ, 2010)" However, this three-fold responsibility has not yet been taken by the Union and all the Member States.

### **3.4 Raw Materials Diplomacy**

The idea that "CSR standards or other references texts are better developed at global level (Zourek, 2006)" has made the EU dedicated to the promotion of international standards and norms outside the Europe. Among all those activities and initiatives, there are ones that have extended the boundaries of CSR and brought a lot of controversies, the EITI for

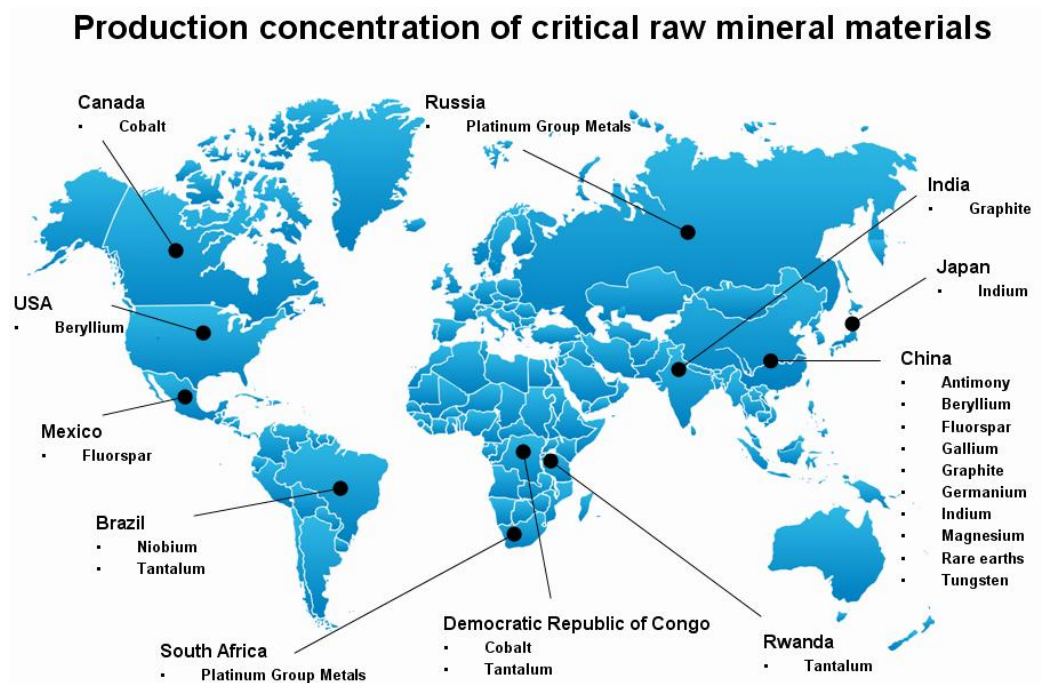
instance, which brings up the concept of “resource curse” and thus heated discussion over this already sensitive issue.

In 2002, the EITI was announced by Tony Blair, the then-Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa as the future transparency standard worldwide. The EITI is one of the international “soft law” tools to curb corruption and help resource-rich countries benefit from the revenues from their soil (Ölcer, 2009). Now 30 (EITI website figures) resource-rich countries and a great many extractive corporations had signed up the EITI. A number of governments, including those of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, plus the European Union, support the EITI (EITI website). Besides, the World Bank, the Group of 8, the International Monetary Fund, institutional investors, a number of multilateral organizations and civil society also provides help and support through various means. Thus, “as a coalition of governments, companies, civil society groups, investors and international organizations promoting transparency in payments made by extractive companies and revenues received by governments, the founders expected that governance and accountability would improve in these countries and ultimately lead to a larger share of revenues being spent on economic growth and poverty reduction (Ölcer, 2009)”. The EITI has displayed the concerns of the EU and other actors in the resource-dependent world. Yet, initiatives like the EITI are far from enough to meet the EU’s demand. The EU has to come up with more aggressive strategies to address the severe situation in global race of resources.

In 2009, the EU, the US as well as Mexico had challenged China’s export restrictions on nine different raw materials and argued that those restrictions could not support environmental grounds. The WTO dispute settlement panel stated that China’s restrictive export policies violated both the prohibition of all quantitative restrictions in the GATT agreement and China’s additional vow to eliminate all export tariffs. Tensions between rapid and sustainable economic growth and the urgent demands for environment and natural resource protection have been one of China’s greatest challenges since its

economic boom. In dealing with this delicate balance, China has been increasing its restriction in exporting in the last few years, measures of which include export VAT rebates, export taxes, licenses, and quotas on raw materials. Officially, the government claims that these policies are for environment protection purposes and they are made to develop China's green economy. Yet to the West, these policies are actually served for ensuring domestic market supply and providing domestic enterprises unfair advantages.

The controversies over China's export restrictions bring us to another hot issue in EU-China relations: the raw materials race. The race for world's raw materials has become tougher since China's economic booming and the competition is getting fierce with other emerging economies such as India and Brazil. Fourteen critical raw materials were identified by the EU in a Commission report, including: antimony, beryllium, cobalt, fluorspar, gallium, germanium, graphite, indium, magnesium, niobium, platinum group metals, rare earths, tantalum and tungsten (EC: Report of the Ad-hoc Working Group Defining Critical Raw Materials, July 2010). The distribution of their production worldwide can be seen from the graph below.



Source: Report of the Ad-hoc Working Group on defining critical raw materials, Version of 30 July 2010, the European Commission

As explained in the report and the graph above, China has a large share of world production in most of the fourteen critical minerals. Consequently, it is reasonable for the EU to fear a situation where China restricts exports of strategic minerals. As stated in the World Trade Report 2010, “fears of inadequate access to supplies in resource-scarce countries and of inappropriate exploitation in resource-rich regions could lead to trade conflict or worse” (Gregow, 2011). Actually we can see this happening: the tension between China and the EU has been raised in recent years due to the WTO dispute.

Against this background, the EU has been working on its “raw material supply strategy”, with of course a European normative flavour: “Europe needs to maintain and gain access to raw materials from third countries, but it aims at doing so in a way that is fair to both sides, and creates win-win situations (Enterprise & Industry magazine, 2011).” To achieve this aim, the EU has come up with the “raw materials diplomacy”, which means “the promotion of good governance, human rights, conflict resolution, non-proliferation and regional stability in resource-rich countries (Enterprise & Industry magazine, 2011).” Accordingly, the key elements of the “raw material supply strategy” include:

- *“Regularly updating the list of critical raw materials already identified by the European Commission;*
- *Monitoring the development of access to critical raw materials with the view to identifying priority actions;*
- *Strengthening the EU’s raw materials trade strategy and engaging in ‘raw materials diplomacy’;*
- *Developing bilateral co-operation with African countries in the area of raw materials, based on promoting good governance, investment and geological knowledge and skills;*
- *Improving the regulatory framework for sustainable extraction within the EU;*
- *Enhancing resource efficiency and promoting recycling;*

- *Promoting further research and innovation efforts along the entire value chain of raw materials, from extraction, processing, recycling and resource efficiency to substitution.” (Enterprise & Industry magazine, 2011)*

There are certainly corollaries to these aspects; most obviously for example, the environmental impacts of the EU’s extractive industries would supposedly be mitigated as CSR norms are regarded as the comparative advantage of the EU. Also, research and educational projects in extractive fields would be enhanced. In terms of social development impacts, we can imagine more comprehensive governance practices. In the raw material diplomacy case, we mainly examine the four exemplar countries’ raw material strategy at the national level and their positions or attitude in the above mentioned common EU raw material diplomacy.

#### *France*

There is no English document of France’s raw material strategy available on the official website of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, at the European Environment Agency’s country profile, information on resource strategy could be found, the “Strategic Metals Plan” (EEA, 2011) for instance. Following this Plan, a Committee was also set up in January 2011, working for enhancing the resource recycling system and international cooperation. The French government is fully aware of its dependence of raw materials and the identification of critical ones was also part of the efforts. While the emphasis remains domestic policy in mining and recycling, the French government considers fostering partnership with major exporters of great importance.

According to the observation and analysis conducted by the British government, “France’s Strategic Metals Plan stresses the need to identify the areas which make France vulnerable to resource scarcity and determine how to remedy the situation. The strategy also states the government’s aspiration to extend geological knowledge with targeted exploration campaigns for strategic metals. The promotion of sustainable exploitation, development of new tools for use in exploration and the investigation of ways to make

the extraction and the transformation of strategic metals easier are also aims of the strategy. Furthermore, it aims to look at the recycling policy for strategic metals and strengthen governmental action by appointing a senior civil servant for strategic metals (DEFRA, 2012)”.

### *The UK*

The UK does not have a dedicated raw material strategy either. As explained on the EEA country profile though, the UK has made a “Sustainable Development Strategy” in 2005 (EEA, 2011) and its overall policy adopts a business approach. Just like the way it promotes CSR, the UK develops its resource efficiency strategy by encouraging best practice, setting standards, and leading by examples.

The WRAP (Waste & Resource Action Programme) plays the most significant role in supporting the government’s strategy. It “provides advice and support on material resource efficiency in the UK so that householders, businesses, civil society organizations, local authorities and the public sector can save money and make better use of resources (EEA, 2011).”

The newly founded government is outlining key policies actively, in resource security particularly. It made commitment in publishing “an action plan on resource security to assist business with strategic risk management and recovery of critical resources (EEA, 2011)”. There are common solutions shared among most European countries such as building stronger and better relationship with the resource suppliers and developing new technologies to increase resource efficiency; yet still, as just mentioned, the UK has some highlights next to these actions. It aims to achieve this goal through the efforts from individual economic sectors. It sees transparency, training or education of the public, and best practice of businesses vital in the overall strategy. Therefore, the UK sets out many voluntary agreements among the stakeholders.

### *Germany*



Different from France and the UK, Germany has its own raw material strategy titled “The German Government’s Raw Material Strategy - Safeguarding a Sustainable Supply of Non-energy Resources for Germany” (Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, 2010). In this document, critical materials were also identified with a reference to the fourteen critical materials in the EC’s report. More specifically, the German’s document made an in-depth assessment of the role emerging technologies could play in reshaping the demand and supply relationship. In this document, similar approaches such as increasing resource efficiency and recycling, diversifying supply from various channels, as well as establishing partnership with producers could be found. Furthermore, the German strategy has highlighted the political support the government would provide to the business sector. Ensuring a stable price and access through political and financial means would be the role of the German government, such as signing bilateral agreement and funding extractive industry.

### *The Netherlands*

The Dutch government also has a raw material strategy of its own. The “Dutch Government Policy Document on Raw Materials” is available on the website of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this document, a thorough analysis of the supply demand relationship, the Dutch position in the multi-polar system, and the prospectus of investing in sustainability were made as the background information. The Dutch have their own concerns in the raw material strategy due to its status as an important centre for logistics of imports and exports. This explains why in this document, “free trade and open market system” was highlighted as one of the objectives the government should achieve. At the same time, being a relatively smaller state, the Netherlands emphasizes the principle of “European where possible, national where necessary and where it offers opportunities” (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012). It stresses that individual country would not be able to counter this problem alone; thus, the Netherlands is “keen to see a strong European policy aimed at promoting an open trading system” (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012). It further claims that “where the EU has the necessary

competence, the Netherlands will actively encourage policy formation (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012)”.

## Conclusion

Fitting the above mentioned raw material diplomacy strategic framework, the RMI is accordingly brought out as a common EU strategy to counter the competitive disadvantage of EU’s businesses and industries. In November 2008, the European Commission presented a Communication to the European Parliament and the Council named “The Raw Materials Initiative – Meeting Our Critical Needs for Growth and Jobs in Europe”, aiming at providing a policy response to Europe’s growing concerns regarding access to raw materials, given the increasing global demand from new emerging powers and the likely possible supply shortages that this could entail (Ramdoo, 2011). The Initiative proposed an integrated strategy to guarantee sufficient market access to raw materials at a fair price and on non-discriminatory terms. It is based on three pillars: access to raw materials on world markets at undistorted conditions, sustainable supply of raw materials from European sources and reducing EU’s consumption of primary raw materials (COM 2008 /699: “The Raw Materials Initiative – Meeting Our Critical Needs for Growth and Jobs in Europe”).

In February 2011, a new Communication was unveiled, termed “Tackling the Challenges in Commodity Markets and on Raw Materials”, this time with a wider scope to address policies in areas of financial markets, development, trade, industry and external relations. The new Communication addresses issues linked to commodities markets, including energy (oil, gas and electricity), agriculture and security of food supply as well as raw materials. It has also proposed new areas of action in the three pillars previously mentioned. In this Communication, the EU further reinforced its pursuit of “raw materials diplomacy”: an open campaign against export restrictions. More specifically, “the EU will work with other international institutions to foster dialogue for a better understanding of the impact of export restrictions on raw materials markets, will further embed removal of trade and investment restrictions in trade negotiations at all levels, will establish a

monitoring mechanism for exports restrictions and will use autonomous measures against third countries in bilateral and multilateral frameworks (Ramdoo, 2011).”

The EC argues that “there is a proliferation of government measures that distort international trade in raw materials and such ‘trade distorting’ measures include export taxes and quotas, subsidies, price-fixing, dual pricing as well as restrictive investment rules (Gregow, 2011).” The Commission claims that “China, Russia, Ukraine, Argentina, South Africa and India are among the key countries involved in applying such measures (Ibid).” In the Communication “The Raw Materials Initiative – Meeting Our Critical Needs for Growth and Jobs in Europe”, the determination of EU to counter such protective measures is quite strong and obvious:

*“The EU should work towards the elimination of trade distorting measures taken by third countries in all areas relevant to access to raw materials. The EU will take vigorous action to challenge measures which violate WTO or bilateral rules, using all mechanisms and instruments available, including enforcement through the use of dispute settlement. More generally, the EU will act against the protectionist use of export restrictions by third countries. In determining its actions, the EU will take as priority those export restrictions that pose the greatest problems for EU user industries or give their domestic downstream industries an unfair competitive advantage on international markets.” (COM 2008/699)*

In other words, confrontation with China would be inevitable under this Initiative, which suggests that when vital self-interest is concerned, the EU would come up with a common strategy even though it might bring some negative consequences with China. From the discussion above, it is clear that all these countries are resource-dependent and are aware of the severe situation at the moment. Though there are minor differences in national resource/raw material strategies, they are all seeking to guarantee stable access to raw materials and increase resource efficiency. The removal of trade barriers and the idea of green economy or sustainable development fall right in line with the European value in trade liberation and sustainability, which means the costs of political campaigns

would be relatively lower. Therefore, there are no major obstacles in coming up with such a common strategy.

## **Chapter 4 China's Perception**

It should be made clear that perception from the Chinese side varies from different walks of life. The government officials, social elites, scholars and main-stream media could be grouped as one category as generally they have better knowledge of the EU and relevant background information and their understanding of the EU largely affects the policy preferences of China. They also dominate the mass propaganda which serves the interests of the regime. Their perception could be analyzed from the official documents, interviews and major media reports or articles. While scholars, especially European Studies experts, generally have more knowledge of the EU than ordinary people and have a say in shaping the policy outcome. Their perception could be observed from academic literature in European Studies in China. As for the ordinary citizens, it is unrealistic to expect them to know a lot about the EU, not to mention every single Member State. However, their general impression of the EU would be an effective touchstone of the EU's normative power. Their perception, thus, would be generalized from public survey conducted by research institutions or relevant programmes. This chapter, therefore, will focus on these two categories of Chinese audiences, and attempt to compare their differences, and draw some implications regarding whether the EU is successful or not in projecting its normative power.

### **4.1 Perception of the Chinese Authorities**

Generally speaking, the Chinese authorities consider the EU inefficient in adopting common foreign policy towards China. Thus, although they are aware of the fact that the EU is eager to project its normative power, they do not believe the EU is capable of doing so. As most European studies experts have argued, the conflicts of interests and preferences among the Member States would eventually keep the EU from making serious commitments to the promotion of human rights, the rule of law, democracy and so forth. This is confirmed by interviews with governmental officials and public opinion leaders. Especially in the case of the arms embargo and the human rights issues, they believe that the EU has inefficient decision-making procedures; thus it would be rather

difficult to come up with common actions towards China. Furthermore, in the eyes of most Chinese officials, criticism made by European leaders is merely a response to domestic pressure from the parliament or the public and those leaders are very cautious in making further severe actions. In other words, the Chinese authorities see the EU, or more accurately, the EU Member States as realistic actors in decision-making and policy implementation. Commitments to politically sensitive norms such as democracy, the rule of law and human rights would not prioritize over economic interests if they are at the expense of the bilateral relationship.

However, when talking about norms such as sustainability or CSR, the Chinese authorities would not share the above attitude. They are well aware of the nature and implications of these norms and of course the commercial drives behind these norms. Thus, the Chinese authorities have a two-way strategy to respond to the EU's activities: on the one hand improving its performance in CSR and sustainability by actively adopting international initiatives and developing its own standards, and on the other hand revealing the true motivation of the Western initiatives to the Chinese citizens through mass propaganda.

Taking the EITI as an example, China has responded positively since the establishment of EITI. The content of the EITI and its implications are well explained to the mass audience through many channels. Yet, it is rather difficult to conclude simply whether the Chinese government is supporting the EITI or not. The attitude is ambiguous as on the one hand, the government has been continuously reporting news on EITI on the official website of Ministry of Commerce while on the other hand China has not joined the EITI itself. In some speeches, Chinese leadership has acknowledged the importance of transparency and third party-supervision in extractive industries; yet there is no official acknowledgement of the Initiative itself. On top of official news reports, the Chinese translation of the original Initiative is also published on major websites relevant to resource management or CSR. For example, on the CSR-China Net, there is one column named "Zhishi (Knowledge)", which contains all relevant information such as voluntary standards, research reports, policy and regulations, and so forth. A brief introduction with

a full content of the EITI is posted in October 2009 under the topic “voluntary standards”. The Chinese version of many EITI-relevant reports by different organizations and think-tanks can also be found on major websites such as Sina and Sohu. Not only on knowledge of EITI itself, the government and public media have also reported on conferences and seminars on EITI related issues as well as speeches made there. These information flows have definitely increased the awareness of transparency issues in extractive industries and brought a lot discussion in academia and the media field.

Most scholars and opinion leaders appear to support the basic idea of EITI and they have made in-depth discussions on the implications of EITI for China. Literature regarding the EITI has made very positive comments. It is believed that the design of resource management system is crucial for a resource rich country to have a “resource bless” instead of a “resource curse”. A scholar who supports the idea of EITI and claims that “natural resource should be owned by the public and argues that most Chinese enterprises are lacking self-discipline and the government is not supervising well enough (Zhou, 2011).” Others criticize the governments’ contradicting efforts at home and abroad, which the author named “the Chinese paradox of extraction industry transparency (Ju, 2011).” Basically he thinks it is odd that mostly China has been following the international norms and regulations positively in order to build its reputation abroad. He agrees that transparency is essential to prevent corruption and supports the EITI: “Perhaps people may argue that this Initiative is made by the West to limit the rising developing countries for political purposes and the EITI could indeed increase the cost of Chinese investments in extractive industries. Nevertheless, we should realize that this initiative is valued by more and more excellent TNCs and countries. More and more wise parties are joining in the Initiative or supporting its implementation (Ju, 2011).” The biggest contradiction, the author points out, is that China is not doing the same at home while it follows the initiative to some extent when China is doing business in relevant countries. In other words, the government has not provided enough protection to the local inhabitants and supervision over local enterprises has lacked severely. Thus, if China can implement the EITI well at home, China would not pay that many costs in extractive industry. There is also literature focusing on the implications of EITI for China as they consider the EITI as

a helpful tool for the risk-control in China's foreign investments. To adopt the international standard and maintain sustainable resource development can help lower the risks for China's business abroad. In other words, transparency is in China's interests for its enterprises abroad, especially in mining and other resource industry. The government is responsible for most crucial issues in resource extraction industries and China should gradually develop a sound management system that can prepare itself for the EITI requirements. In addition, the authors advocate that Chinese enterprises should learn host countries' practice in EITI and actively cooperate with relevant parties, which can help build good reputation and smooth the progress of their projects.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the Chinese authorities fully welcome the Western initiatives. As mentioned above, the government also keeps informing the public of the so-called "conspiracy of the West". Thus, suspicion over the EITI could be found in main-stream media channel and scholars' works from think-tanks that have closer relationship with the central government. In an interview, a famous scholar Li Anshan from Peking University explained that there were three possible reasons behind the fact that the international society pushes China to join the EITI: 1) The EITI is progressing smoothly, and countries such as China and India that have not yet joined it have hindered the implementation of this plan; thus it is necessary to include China in this Initiative; 2) This program is still in its infancy and its effect is not clear yet; therefore China and India should join and promote the implementation of the Initiative; and 3) The starting point of EITI is problematic, which leads to the fact that it has not been recognized by the majority of resource rich countries. He further argued that according to his observations, the third case would be the most-likely one. Such a cleavage between scholars is the reflection of China's two-way strategy in responding to the EU's promotion in low-politics norms. Yet even those who reckon the EU as best performer and advocates of the CSR initiatives do not see the EU as a normative power since they are also aware of the commercial interests behind these initiatives. It is the belief that the costs are worth-paying that makes them strongly supports these norms.

China's propaganda in revealing the so-called "conspiracy of the West" is best reflected



in China's response to the RMI. Main-stream media such as Renmin Net and Xinhua Net have been publishing news comments regarding RMI, mostly negative.

Attacks such as those on the RMI are frequently focused on the EU's selfish developing strategy and its contradictory stances to its own trade policies are the most frequently appeared ones. This is the most popular judgment of RMI in media reports. They believe that the RMI is primarily structured to feed EU's appetite for raw materials. They argue that China's restriction of some raw materials is out of environmental concerns since the negative externalities of resource extraction and trade, such as environmental damage, biodiversity loss and increased CO2 emissions are more worrying. They further point out that while the EU is always describing itself as a pioneer in environment protection, it puts environmental issues aside when its core interests might be harmed. They argue that such a contradictory attitude is not only seen from this selfish motive but also from its own trade policies. For example, under the current Euro crisis, the EU is putting a lot of efforts in anti-dumping and protecting its own enterprises by keeping foreign goods out of the EU's market. Nevertheless, the EU is requiring other countries open the market for its own need in the meantime. In addition, they believe that the RMI is fundamentally aiming at increasing the competitiveness of European companies. In order to help European companies to better access raw materials in resource rich countries, the RMI focuses on removing barriers from their domestic policies, leaving aside the legitimate environmental regulations or measures taken by resource rich countries upon extraction industries. The fact that the EU is playing against its former stance clearly reflects its political bias towards corporate interests, especially under the current economic crisis.

In sum, the Chinese authorities see the EU as an insistent player in the promotion of norms such as human rights, democracy, the rule of law and sustainability. The conflicts among the Member States, in particular, make the convergence of the EU normative power rather difficult. Therefore, by blaming the EU for its double standards and revealing the "true face" of the West, Chinese authorities strongly doubt the EU's commitment to those ideational factors and emphasize this fact in its mass propaganda, which, in their mind setting, could enhance its regime stability.

## 4.2 Perception of the Chinese Citizens

Demonstrations and mass appeals to boycott French brands and goods around the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games were mostly out of the anger of the Chinese citizens with regard to incidents regarding human rights issues: the then President Nicolas Sarkozy's decision to meet with Dalai Lama and his claim that France might boycott Olympics, as well as the disruption of the Olympic torch relay in Paris. The torch relay was protested not only in France, but by advocates of Tibetan independence and activists protesting against China's human rights record in several countries. The demonstrations in China were seen as the rise of nationalism. Yet there were arguments saying that it was a result of top-down propaganda aimed at maintain regime stability. However, it is not our focus to examine why the demonstrations occurred or whether the protests of the citizens indicate a negative attitude towards Europe. We need to know if the Chinese citizens view the EU and its Member States as a normative power.

Observations would most be based on existing survey data and focused group interviews carried out by research institutes and China-EU projects, as well as empirical observations from social resources such as information from social media and social network platforms. Nevertheless, the notion of normative power is relatively new and not familiar with most Chinese citizens. Thus, it is rather difficult to come up with a simple question in conducting surveys or to find discussion exclusively focusing on the EU's normative power among the mass. Thus, indirect perceptions of the EU's self-performance in relevant fields and the EU's activities in China will be investigated instead.

In 2010, a "Chinese Views of EU" public survey was carried out by a theme research of the "Seventh Framework Programme" initiated by the Commission. The survey was based on 2410 questionnaires from six cities in China aiming to analyze Chinese citizens' attitudes toward the EU. This theme research indicates that a majority of ordinary Chinese citizens perceive that the EU plays "a positive role in the world regarding all six

domains presented in the questionnaire. Most positive is the perception of the EU role in scientific progress, followed by its role in environment protection, international economy and peace, fighting international terrorism, and fighting poverty in the world (Dekker and van der Noll, 2011).” Also, “a small majority of the respondents like the European ideas and promotion of democracy (Dekker and van der Noll, 2011).” This indicates a general impression of the EU as an active and powerful player in scientific progress, sustainable development, as well as international peace and justice. There is also a great percentage of people consider the EU as a good performer in “political governance, environment, social welfare, and quality of life (Dekker and van der Noll, 2011).” Thus, it can be concluded that in the eyes of most Chinese citizens, the EU is doing quite well in domains such as peace, democracy, sustainable development and good governance.

While the Chinese citizens do find the EU an active player in human rights issues, many interviewees in focused group interviews felt that “the Europeans were seeking to make use of the Tibet issue as a political tool to check China” and “not really for democracy and liberty” (Tang, 2011). Such opinions are based on the claim that China’s sovereignty and core interests should be harmed by external players.

As for the EU’s activities in less political sensitive issues such as the CSR promotion, the Chinese citizens are much less critical. For example, plenty of articles and comments from mass media as well as online forums have explained the successful performance of exemplar countries which has joined the EITI and hoped that China could implement it home and abroad to prevent corruption and better manage resource industry. At the same time, the public is also aware of the consequences and challenges. Comments of the possible costs and challenges China faces in joining the EITI can be found in major websites having a business focus. The Chinese citizens see the EU as the pioneer and best practice in CSR and supports relevant initiatives. While this of course reflects the EU’s good performance in these domains, it definitely indicates the discontents of Chinese citizens with China’s severe situation in environmental pollution, labor standard, corruption and so forth.

In a nutshell, ordinary Chinese citizens view the EU positively as a region enjoying good governance, democracy, liberty, and sustainable development. While in the international world, it has been playing an important role in maintaining peace and justice, relieving international poverty and promoting sustainability. Despite of negative opinions on the EU's activities in human rights promotion, Chinese citizens do see the EU as an active player in projecting its normative power.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

### 5.1 Implications and Limitation of the Study

By examining the notion of NPE in selected cases on human rights issues, the arms embargo, and the promotion of CSR, this thesis argues that the notion of NPE as well as ideational factors have their limits in explaining EU's foreign policies toward China and explains the lack of convergence in a common normative policy towards China. The most significant reason behind the shortcomings of NPE is that the member states and EU institutions still have heterogeneous interests and norms dealing with China, who may have perceived these shortcomings as disunity within EU and tried to neutralize the normative pressures from EU by bargaining with some EU members individually. However, although normative factor is far from being the only consequential power in the decision-making of EU's foreign policies, its profound influence has become a principal catalyst in shaping EU-China relations. This thesis therefore provides a much needed analysis of how ideational factors affect EU's China policy-making.

While this thesis has contributed to the literature of the EU's normative power in terms of foreign relations, it also contributes to the study of the EU's promotion of its values and norms in China. First, it has provided a theoretically grounded discussion of the notion of NPE and EU's foreign policy making towards China. Secondly, it provides a more in-depth analysis of the EU and its Member States' engagement with China through case studies in both high politics and low politics issues, which is usually not included in previous literature. Lastly, it has displayed the Chinese perception of NPE, from the authorities' perspective as well as ordinary citizens' perspective. In addition, the relevance of this thesis could extend beyond EU-China relations, providing conclusions interesting to those studying any aspect of EU external policy-making toward other countries.

Nevertheless, restricted by time and resource available for this study, this thesis has several shortcomings as well. First and foremost, it would suffer from its simplicity in

treating the multiple actors in EU foreign policy making and excluding many international actors beyond EU and China. The interaction between other regional actors and great powers would also have leverage on EU's foreign policy, especially the Trans-Atlantic relationship, as could be seen from the arms embargo case. Secondly, the time-framework of relevant cases is another big challenge. To include all major events in the past years would be a huge amount of work. Thus, in this research, only featuring events and major activities have been selected, which, would definitely harm the comprehensiveness of this study. Lastly, restricted by time and resources, direct social survey on Chinese perception of NPE is not possible. Otherwise, a more accurate reflection of China's understanding could be provided in the fourth chapter. A Future research model should address these issues and include a more comprehensive analysis.

## **5.2 Concluding Remarks**

The hypotheses posed at the beginning have been tested by the selected cases. Great powers that have more stakes involved are less likely to prioritize normative interests. While it is true that states are not willing to sacrifice economic interests at the expense of norms promotion, states that have a strong liberal political culture or with strong political lobby groups that advocate for certain values, have no choice but to prioritize normative interests, as can be seen from the case of the Netherlands and Nordic countries. Besides, the Member States can easily achieve consensus in low politics issues where political costs are much lower in projecting normative power.

The previous discussion also suggests that selected Member States are adept in balancing economic and normative interests. The EU can only project normative power when normative interests are privileged over others by powerful Member States. More importantly, the case studies show that in principle the EU Member States use the EP or the EC as an additional tool, which means when vital self-interests are at stake, they would give up a coherent EU normative policy; and when their interests do not conflict much, such as in the cases of CSR promotion and raw material diplomacy, they would strive for a common European policy or action that would strengthen the EU's

negotiating power against an increasingly strong China. Such a lack of support from Member States of course results in the inability of the Union to push forward effective policy towards China with a normative nature. Accordingly, the normative power of the EU originates from congruence, rather than convergence of the Member States.

However, since liberal political culture does have leverage in policy making, it could be expected that with the on-going socialization within the EU, as well as the increase of external expectations, the EU would have to find a better way to exert its normative power.

Although Chinese authorities do not see the EU as an adequate normative power and to some extent benefit from the structural weakness of the EU, they are also aware of the fact that the EU has been very successful in norms promotion in several domains. The Chinese propaganda in revealing the inconsistency of the West would probably be a bitter experience of the EU and at the same time another reason for the EU to abandon the discordance within the Union. The EU, in many Chinese citizens' eyes, has already had the sound basis for exerting normative power. Thus, how to better balance the economic and normative power and how to make better use of its normative power would be the urgent.

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