

A Theory Comparison and Empirical Examination of Soft Power China and Normative Power Europe in North Africa and Central Asia

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Abstract

Normative power and soft power theory gained prominence in the late 1990s and early 2000s as two theories concerned with the foreign policy of international powers. Normative power theory has especially focused on the European Union as an international actor, while China has often been the focus of soft power theory. The two theories share assumptions about the role of norms and international identities in contributing to power. Yet these assumptions have remained largely untested. As China and the EU are representative types of normative and soft power, an empirical examination of the soft/normative power of the two can contribute to discussions of normative and soft power theory. This paper will attempt such an examination, highlighting in turn potential gaps in the theories and areas for improvement in discussions of normative and soft power.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Abbreviations	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	8
I. Research Question	8
II. Methodology	10
Chapter 2: Normative Power and Soft Power Theory	13
I. Introducing the Theories.....	13
II. Constructing Soft/Normative Identities.....	15
III Agency and the ‘Other’.....	17
IV Normative Power Europe and Soft Power China.....	19
VI. Theoretical Shortcomings	22
Chapter 3: Empirics	24
I. The Contexts.....	24
II. The EU and North Africa.....	25
III. China and North Africa	33
IV. The EU and Central Asia	39
V. China and Central Asia	42
Chapter 4. Analysis	46
II. The EU and North Africa	46
III. China and North Africa	49
IV. The EU and Central Asia	52
V. China and Central Asia	54
VI. The Broader Picture	56
Conclusion	59
Bibliography	61

List of Abbreviations

AA	Association Agreement of EMP
AP	Action Plan of ENP
CABSI	Central Asia Border Security Initiative
CSR	Country Strategy Report
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighborhood & Partnership Instrument
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
MEDA	Mesures d'accompagnement (Accompanying measures)
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee
RATS	Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Chapter 1: Introduction

I. Research Question

That the EU is such a different type of international actor, and represents a new kind of power in international politics is not much disputed. -Thomas Diez, 2005¹

An underlying assumption of much of normative power theory of European Union (EU) foreign policy, clearly stated above, is that the EU represents a new and unique type of international actor. There are various different explanations put forward as to what constitutes a Normative Power Europe (NPE), and why it is unique. The assumptions of normative power theory have been debated at depth. Yet the focus of normative power literature remains on the EU and its foreign policy, without any serious comparison with other powers that might be considered 'normative'. With few exceptions (see *Who is a Normative Foreign Policy Actor*)², there has yet been no rigorous attempt at expanding the discussion of normative power to other international powers, nor an attempt to search for parallels in other theory. The crux of much of the NPE theoretical debate then is an inferred EU exceptionalism, an 'ideal type' of normative foreign policy actor.³

Yet from the other side of the world has emerged another powerful international actor, and a subject of much debate: China. With China's rise has come great interest in a theory of soft power that shares certain features with normative power theory. Soft power

¹ Thomas Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 3 (2005): 614.

² Nathalie et al. Tocci, *Who Is a Normative Foreign Actor? The European Union and Its Global Partners*, ed. Natalie Tocci (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008).

³ Tuomas Forsberg, "Normative Power Europe, Once Again: A Conceptual Analysis of an Ideal Type," *JCMS* 49, no. 6 (2011).

theory, first coined by Joseph Nye in 1990 in *Bound to Lead*⁴, focuses on China's (and other actors') promotion of history, culture, and values as a key part of its foreign policy. Soft power theory views China's use of these soft power resources as part of asserting its influence abroad and establishing its emerging great power status. In this way, and in contrast to normative power theory, it is more open to a discussion of China's strategic calculations in using its soft power. Yet like normative power theory, it shares the assumption that China's soft power approach helps create an international identity for China as a rising global power.⁵ The focus of soft power theory is, much like normative power theory, limited to certain actors: China and the US. While Chinese soft power theory doesn't assume China to be unique in its use of soft power, there again is little attempt to seriously consider other global powers as soft power wielders, or to make use of discourse from other theoretical debates.

What can be gained from a consideration of normative power theory with soft power theory? What does a tying-together of these two theories have to offer discussions of civilian, normative, or soft power? A structured comparison of the two is beneficial on two levels. First, it reminds us that discussions on EU foreign policy are not unique for producing theories on non-military, non-coercive forms of power. Considerations of other 'forms' of normative power theory may offer new insights and challenges to the essentially isolated discussions of NPE and soft power China. Second—and relevant for normative power theory—it can highlight that there are other foreign policy actors who attempt to create international identities and promote their own norms. The discourse on NPE not only tends to unconvincingly argue the EU is an exceptional type of normative actor, but it largely neglects any discussion of other rising powers altogether. If it is indeed true that other foreign policy actors develop a focus on softer forms of power as part of their rise as influential players,

⁴ Mingjiang Li, "Introduction: Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature," in *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics* ed. Mingjiang Li (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009).

⁵ "Soft Power in Chinese Discourse: Popularity and Prospect," in *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics* ed. Mingjiang Li (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009), 22,28.

then the process of changing perceptions and norms is much more complex than is offered by normative power theory.

For these reasons, my research will focus on a normative/soft power comparison of China and the EU. By examining normative power and soft power theory, and then empirically examining normative power Europe and soft power China, I hope to help to contribute to broader discussions of normative power and soft power. If the EU and China represent ideal types of normative/soft powers, a look at EU normative power and Chinese soft power can provide insight about normative and soft power theory in general.

II. Methodology

I will approach my research using interpretivist methodology. The interpretivist approach first assumes that the objective and subjective meanings of the world are deeply intertwined.⁶ Reality is knowable, but only through the lens of human subjectivity. One of my goals is to examine the subjective identity constructions of China and the EU as rising global powers. I will proceed under the assumption that, while there is an objective reality to the rise of the EU and China as international powers, the meanings that are given to their rises are not. One can certainly conclude that the EU and China are rising global powers. But the discourse that surrounds them, the way they are constructed as international actors, and the way they are perceived abroad, are deeply subjective. However, these two realities, objective and subjective, are not distinct and independent realities. The subjective reality given to China and the EU—their normative/soft ‘powerness’—shapes the objective reality of their increasing influence in global affairs. In other words, I will assume that the great deal of

⁶ Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating, in *Approaches and Methodologies in Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, ed. Donatella and Michael Keating Della Porta (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 24.

discourse on normative power and soft power influences European and Chinese policy makers, and this limits the scope of possible foreign policy decisions. Interpretivist approaches similarly assume that we cannot understand historical events or social phenomenon without looking at the interpretations that people have of the world”.⁷ This is quite an appropriate approach to discussions of normative/soft power, if this power is made to be a result of identity constructions and human perceptions.

The goal of my research is not to isolate distinct variables from two cases and to determine causal paths⁸, but rather to examine the theories of normative and soft power, and to look at two specific normative and soft powers, the EU and China. The two can be seen as representatives of normative/soft power actors, actors who seek to navigate a post-Cold War global setting in which the use of military force and aggressive and coercive means are largely delegitimized. Examining these two representatives of normative/soft power theory can offer insights about the theories in general.

To begin with, I will delineate how the EU and China have been constructed as normative/soft powers. To do this, I will examine official statements, official publications, agreements between the two powers and partners, and the literature on normative and soft power. Much of what has been made of the EU and China’s normative/soft power has been drawn from official statements and publications that make reference to norms and values. International agreements in the normative-soft power arguments. *Soft Power: China’s Emerging Strategy in International Politics*⁹, a collection of works on China’s soft power, offers a series of analyses from Chinese-speaking researchers of various Chinese primary sources such as government publications and speeches by public officials. China’s official news agency *Xinhua* publishes various statements on Chinese soft power. EU statements,

⁷ Ibid., 24-25.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Mingjiang Li, *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics* ed. Mingjiang Li (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009).

treaties, and agreements with third states make ample reference to EU norms and values, and the literature generally makes reference to the same norms.

After examining how the two have been constructed as normative/soft powers, I will then look at how these constructions influence their foreign policy behaviors. The policies they have toward the same contexts should reflect to some extent normative/soft power narratives. For this reason, I will look at contexts in which both the EU and the China have active foreign policies, and then look at the extent to which normative and soft power theory provides an accurate narrative for those foreign policies. Considering situations in which both China and the EU are active players will help to expand the discussion of normative/soft power theory beyond a singular focus on either the EU or China, normative power or soft power theory.

Chapter 2: Normative Power and Soft Power Theory

In this chapter I will compare normative power theory and soft power theory and then outline how the EU and China are constructed as normative/soft powers. Normative power and soft power theory have their origins in roughly the same time period, and they share a number of assumptions. There are differences between the theories, most obviously related to specific norms that constitute the two actors' powers, but there are also similarities. The two theories deal with rising global powers and their identities and policies in international relations, yet there has been no attempt at bridging the gap between the two. If the assumption behind normative and soft power theory is that foreign policy actors' 'power' is built on representations of and attraction to cultural, social, and political systems, then there is definitely something to be gained from looking at other powers and other theories. This chapter will attempt to draw together shared aspects of normative and soft power theory, providing a comparison of the two. It will then look at normative power Europe and soft power China before moving to an empirical examination.

I. Introducing the Theories

Joseph Nye defined soft power as, "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments," and as a power arising from, "the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideas, and policies".¹⁰ Soft power is about, "getting others to want

¹⁰ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* 1st ed. (New York, NY, USA: PublicAffairs, 2004), x.

what you want”; it “co-opts people rather than coerces them”.¹¹ It is not about military might or economic clout, but instead works through attraction and admiration. By wielding soft power resources, global powers create a more favorable environment in which to achieve their goals. Soft power resources can range from songs and films, to diplomatic visits and exchange students attending universities. More importantly for this discussion, soft power can include value systems, agenda setting in international organizations, and the shaping of global norms.¹² For the purpose of this paper the crucial aspect of soft power is its ability to shape perceptions abroad, legitimize powers, and promote norms abroad¹³; it is here where we can find similarities to the narrative of normative power. This is a point I will return to later in this chapter.

For a definition of normative power, we can look to the one given by Ian Manners in his initial, influential work on Normative Power Europe:

[It is] the ability to shape or change what passes for normal in international relations, and which will undoubtedly have utilitarian, social, moral, and narrative dimensions to it, just as it will undoubtedly be disputed.¹⁴

Normative power is, “located in a discussion of the ‘power over opinion’, *idée force*, or ‘ideological power’”.¹⁵ Normative power is said to derive not only from actual foreign policy, but an ability to “shape conceptions of the ‘normal’,”¹⁶ and the, “political consequences of the social construction...in world politics.”¹⁷ It is also this concern for the social, discursively constructed identity that normative power theory shares with soft power.

¹¹ Ibid., 5.

¹² Yongjin Zhang, "The Discourse of China's Soft Power and Its Discontents," in *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics* ed. Mingjiang Li (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009), 54-55.

¹³ Shaun Breslin, "The Soft Notion of China's 'Soft Power' " in *Asia Programme* (London, UK: Chatnam House, 2011); Yong Deng, "The New Hard Realities: "Soft Power" and China in Transition," in *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics* ed. Mingjiang Li (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009); Yongjin Zhang, "The Discourse of China's Soft Power and Its Discontents," *ibid.*

¹⁴ Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: The International Role of the Eu," in *The European Union between International and World Society* (Madison, WI, USA2001), 10.

¹⁵ "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?," *JCMS* 40, no. 2 (2002): 239. (emphasis in original)

¹⁶ Thomas Diez and Ian Manners, eds., *Reflecting on 'Normative Power Europe'*, Power in World Politics (New York, NY, USA: Routledge, 2007), 175.

¹⁷ Ibid.

A close look reveals that both theories are rather light on empirical reflection, and instead are built largely on discursive constructions of identity and perception shifting in international relations. What these constructions are, and whether or not normative power and soft power are reflected in actual foreign policy, are important questions that I will address more in this chapter and the next.

II. Constructing Soft/Normative Identities

Both normative power and soft power theory shift the focus of power from traditional power such as military might and economic clout, to alternative forms of power such as changing norms and altering perceptions of power. These alternative forms of power are more important to the international agency of rising powers. The assumption is that soft or normative power is linked to the construction of international identities. Manners refers to this as an *ontological quality*, that a power “can be conceptualized as a changer of norms”.¹⁸ It is important that the EU and China be constructed and perceived as normative, and not associated with hegemony or traditional utilitarian power. These constructions of powers and the external perceptions of them are vital to legitimizing them.

From his original work on normative power Europe, Manners wrote that an analysis of normative power needs to focus on identity:

This move have been important for the simple reason that it shifts the focus of analysis away from the empirical emphasis on the EU’s institutions¹⁹...

and

...by moving the focus away from debates over governance and instrumentality, it is possible to think of the ideational impact of the EU’s international identity/role as being a normative power.²⁰

¹⁸ Manners, "Normative Power Europe: The International Role of the Eu," 9.

¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

²⁰ Ibid., 21.

In this way, it is not entirely the objective agency of a rising power that is most important. It is also the subjective, “ideational” aspect that is attached to that agency. Thomas Diez suggested the importance of “discursive representation”²¹, and the role this plays in an actor’s normative power. Normative power derives not solely from whether or not an actor is a normative power, but how it is constructed as one.²² In other words, it is not only that a rising power acts normatively; it is that the power represents a certain type of actor.

Soft power theory also discusses the importance to soft power of (re)constructing images of power abroad. With soft power theory, the focus is less on what *type* of actor a power is, and more on what tools it uses or how it uses them.²³ Accordingly, military and economic power can contribute to soft power. Yet things like GDP and military spending alone are not enough to enhance an actor’s global power. An actor also depends on soft power and its ability to shape perceptions. If used improperly, the tools used can diminish an actor’s soft power. Unilateral military action by a state, for example, can diminish its soft power. Conversely, strong international support for military intervention can increase a state’s power. There is some parallel in normative power theory along these lines. According to Diez, military and economic forms of power can go hand in hand with normative power and indeed may underpin it.²⁴ It is not which tools of power in particular are exercised, but instead whether they support normative power.

Yet soft power is, like normative power, the business of changing perceptions and ideational influence. For China, the problem with external perceptions of it is that they focus too much on “China’s rise” as an alternative to an international system characterized by Western norms (democracy, human rights, etc.). China has attempted to alleviate these fears by constructing itself as a promoter of the norms of respect and harmony in international

²¹ Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'," 626.

²² Ibid. (emphasis added)

²³ Li, "Introduction: Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature," 7.

²⁴ Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'," 616.

relations, involvement and reliance on diplomacy and international law and institutions, and a rejection of regional and global hegemony. Adherence to these principles can foster actors' soft power. Normative power discourse also makes reference to respect for international law and institutions, and international relations characterized by equality, partnership, and mutual benefit. Both theories see adherence to international norms as contributing to normative/soft power.

III Agency and the 'Other'

At the same time that normative and soft power theory contribute to the construction of international identities for powers, the discourses of both theories construct identities of emerging powers that are able to influence and change the other. Normative power theory assumes that one actor in a relationship is more normal than the other. In the case of the EU, normative power theory posits that the EU is different from the rest, different from the Hobbesian global order in which states remain.²⁵ If the EU lives in a different world from other powers, or is and indeed *should* be a different kind of actor²⁶, then necessarily the EU has better norms to offer²⁷. Surely, different societies and actors influence each other. But by attributing certain actors with normative agency and not others, the assumption is formed that those actors' norms are capable of being universalized.²⁸

Soft power theory also makes this assumption. The powers that are attributed with soft power (the US, China, Russia, etc.) are those that are large on traditional power. Their GDPs or economies or militaries are what would traditionally make them great powers. Soft power attributes these powers with another dimension, the ability to shape norms and

²⁵ Ibid., 619-20; Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness," *Policy Review*, no. 113 (2002).

²⁶ Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'," 619.

²⁷ Ibid., 628.

²⁸ Ibid.

perceptions. This newer form of power is given more weight than other more measurable sources of power. Similar to normative power theory, soft power theory only debates the soft power of certain actors, supposing only *their* agency in relationships. It does not examine the agency of the other. So while normative and soft power theories provide a narrative for legitimizing the agency of rising global powers, the narratives also presume the success of these powers in changing perceptions or *instilling* norms.

Connected to this is the construction of the other as, “the *context* for the agency of external actors.”²⁹ When normative power speaks of the ability of the EU to influence norms in North Africa, or when the effectiveness of China’s soft power is considered in Southeast Asia, the other becomes a context for a “struggle of recognition”³⁰ that the China and the EU are indeed rising global powers, able to change perceptions of what is normal or appropriate. The engagement of the two powers with the other then becomes, “a projection of the perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of international actors about who they think they are, rather than about the objective reality of the region.”³¹ The agency of the other is secondary in the theory, or absent altogether. This construction of self and other is linked to the importance of narrative in constructing international identities. The empirical success of China and the EU in altering perceptions of norms or appropriateness, or of attracting others through values, matters less in the theory than narratives attached to their agency as rising global powers. But this shared characteristic of both theories is also a fault. Before turning my attention to that, I will look at the norms that are a part of China’s soft power and the EU’s normative power. For the sake of this paper, it is important to understand how the two are constructed in theory before analyzing their power in empirical contexts.

²⁹ Emilian Kavalski, *Central Asia and the Rise of Normative Powers: Contextualizing the Security Governance of the European Union, China, and India* (New York, NY, USA: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), 2-3. (emphasis in original)

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

IV Normative Power Europe and Soft Power China

Beginning with a look at the EU, Ian Manners offered a list of nine EU norms—five “core norms” and four “minor norms”—in his paper introducing the term “Normative Power Europe”.³² These five core norms of peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, and human rights, form the basis of the EU’s normative power, and are supplemented by the norms of social progress, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance. Manner identifies these five cores norms by looking at “declarations, treaties, policies, criteria and conditions”, as well as the, “vast body of Union laws and policies which comprise the *acquis communautaire*.”³³ It is these norms, and especially the five core norms, that the EU has established as essential to membership in the EU through the Copenhagen Criteria and Treaty on the European Union.³⁴ The 1986 Single European Act made reference to the “principles of democracy and compliance with the rule of law and with human rights”.³⁵ The EU has also tied these norms into its relations with third countries under the Barcelona Process and European Neighborhood Policy.³⁶ The Barcelona Declaration, for instance, commits the EU and its partners to “in spirit...undertake” to respect and act in accordance with the EU’s principles.³⁷ These norms are those that the EU, at least rhetorically, seeks to promote in its relations with potential members and beyond. According to the EU, its goals is not to

³² Manners, "Normative Power Europe: The International Role of the Eu."

³³ *Ibid.*, 10. (emphasis in original)

³⁴ Nathalie Tocci, "The European Union as a Normative Foreign Policy Actor," in *Who Is a Normative Foreign Actor? The European Union and Its Global Partners*, ed. Natalie Tocci (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008), 27.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁶ "Barcelona Declaration ", (paper presented at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference Barcelona, 1995); Michelle Pace, "Paradoxes and Contradictions in Eu Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean: The Limits of Eu Normative Power," *Democratization* 16, no. 1 (2009): 42.

³⁷ "Barcelona Declaration ".

“impose reform”, but rather, “do all [it] can to support...reforms” in its relations with third countries.³⁸

The norms that constitute part of China’s soft power are somewhat less defined than those of EU normative power. There is no specific list of Chinese norms; authors on Chinese soft power give varying interpretations of Chinese soft power, and emphasis is given to different aspects of Chinese soft power depending on how soft power is constructed. Yet as Yong Deng points out, three soft power norms can more or less characterize the discursive elements of China’s soft power: respect for sovereignty (with non-interference); the Chinese development model (development-focused aid without conditionality); and mutual respect for differences in political system and culture (a “harmonious world”).³⁹

Concerning the first norm of non-interference, Amitav Acharya in *Whose Ideas Matter?*⁴⁰ provides a convincing argument for non-interference as an East Asian norm, what he calls a “cognitive prior”. This is linked to the region’s harsh experiences with colonialism, Japanese imperialism, and US-Soviet interference as a sphere in the Cold War. The Chinese government formally adopted this norm—“sovereignty and territorial integrity” and “non-interference”—in its “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” agreed to with India⁴¹, and still regularly refers to its relevance.⁴² The notion comes up regularly with reference to Tibet, Taiwan, South China Sea disputes, persecution of political dissidents, and China’s control of its exchange rate. It has also been a part of the official rhetoric in China’s role in the UN and in response to international conflicts. China’s foreign minister reiterated the principle in a

³⁸ “Paradoxes and Contradictions in Eu Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean: The Limits of Eu Normative Power,” 42.

³⁹ Deng, “The New Hard Realities: “Soft Power” and China in Transition,” 71.

⁴⁰ Amitav Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter? Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism* (New York, NY, USA: Cornell University 2009).

⁴¹ “The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence: Fundamental and Everlasting Norms Guiding International Relations,” *People’s Daily Online*(2004), http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200406/28/eng20040628_147763.html; “China’s Initiation of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence ”, (2000), <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/ziliao/3602/3604/t18053.htm>.

⁴² “The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence: Fundamental and Everlasting Norms Guiding International Relations”; “China’s Initiation of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence ”.

speech to the UN General Assembly in 2012⁴³, and the principle also was mentioned in China's opposition to action in Syria.⁴⁴

The notion of a Chinese development model appears many times in analyses on Chinese foreign power. Chinese analysts mention it often as an alternative model to the "Washington Consensus" for development.⁴⁵ This alternative model of development has also made its way into the Western discourse; it is not difficult these days to come across mention of the "Beijing consensus". Essentially, the Chinese model boils down to more growth-oriented development aid for developing countries, without the conditionality in aid that is linked to recipient countries democratizing and adopting certain (Western) development norms.

Policy makers in Beijing and Chinese experts alike refer to the last norm, a harmonious world. Former President Hu Jintao spoke of, "a peaceful and stable international environment, a neighbourly and friendly environment in the surrounding regions, a cooperative environment based on equality and mutual benefits."⁴⁶ Li talks of a valuable opportunity for Chinese culture, "which emphatically values 'harmony'."⁴⁷ Deng Xiaoping spoke of the Chinese "Mean", or "harmony among peoples", and former President Hu Jintao spoke of the Mean and a harmonious society again in a speech to the CPC Central Committee in 2005.⁴⁸ The Mean is understood to pertain to Chinese society as well as the "balanced relations among nations".⁴⁹ The ideal is realized in international relations when, "all parties arrive at an equilibrium acceptable to all."⁵⁰ This equilibrium alludes to an international order

⁴³ "China's Foreign Minister Stresses Principle of Non-Interference at Un Debate," *UN News Centre*(2012), http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43101&Cr=&Cr1=#.UXw5kIL_Uy5.

⁴⁴ I-wei Jennifer Chang, "China's Evolving Stance on Syria," (2013), <http://www.mei.edu/content/chinas-evolving-stance-syria>.

⁴⁵ Li, "Soft Power in Chinese Discourse: Popularity and Prospect," 26; Yongjin Zhang, "The Discourse of China's Soft Power and Its Discontents," *ibid.*, 52.

⁴⁶ Mingjiang Li, "Soft Power in Chinese Discourse: Popularity and Prospect," *ibid.*, 31.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁴⁸ Jianfeng Chen, "The Practice of the Mean: China's Soft Power Cultivation," *ibid.*, 90.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Mingjiang Li, "Introduction: Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature," *ibid.*, 12.

that is not dominated by any one power, and a world without global or regional hegemons; along with this comes a mutual respect and equality between nations.

VI. Theoretical Shortcomings

Having compared normative power and soft power theory, I will address the potential shortcomings shared by both. The first of these is the lack of empirical testing to which the theories are subjected. Michael Merlingen alludes to a “lack of conceptual clarity” in normative power theory:

...it remains unclear how the term ‘power’, which is often seen to allude to ‘coercion’, can be articulated to the term ‘normative’, which is typically seen to allude to ‘legitimacy’.⁵¹

In other words, normative power theory fails to account for the fact that EU foreign policy has utilitarian interests just as any other power; when and what constitute ‘normative’ is not so easily deduced. *Who is a Normative Foreign Policy Actor*⁵² begins to address this empirical shortfall by offering a framework to ‘test’ cases of normative ‘powerness’. The analysis Tocci and others use examines normative goals, means and impacts. A closer analysis of these aspects of EU foreign policy rightfully attempts a framework for interrogating normative ‘powerness’. Claims that the EU is a normative power by way of its international identity and unique, hybrid and constitutional nature are incomplete without these sorts of critiques. Normative power—power in general—only exists by virtue of a relationship between two, the power ‘giver’ (the EU) and the power ‘receiver’. The EU can’t be a normative power purely by virtue of European discourse. If its goals or means are not

⁵¹ Michael Merlingen, "Everything Is Dangerous: A Critique of 'Normative Power Europe'," *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 4 (2007): 437-38.

⁵² Tocci, *Who Is a Normative Foreign Actor? The European Union and Its Global Partners*.

normative, or if it does not produce a normative impact, then this is not consistent with normative power.

Soft power theory similarly lacks deeper examination to legitimize claims of China's effectiveness in wielding soft power. In the soft power literature, there is generally no thorough examination of Chinese motives (goals), actual foreign policy (means), or effectiveness (impacts) to accompany analyses of the discursive construction of Chinese soft power. Turning to the more value-norm based aspects of Chinese power, there has again been too little empirical reflection. Do Chinese Confucius Institutes abroad enhance images of China or garner appreciation of Chinese culture that translate into hard power? Has the Chinese development model elevated China as a soft power? Has China followed the Mean, preferring harmonious relations with its neighbors and beyond, as so often claimed? These are questions that need consideration.

Of course, it is impossible to establish any sort of quantitative system for measuring normative or soft power. The power of changing norms and changing minds, by virtue of its socio-psychological nature, cannot be measured on a scale. Yet, a more rigorous attempt can surely be made to evaluate normative and soft power theories. Examining real-world circumstances and ascertaining foreign policy motives, means, and results is a healthy exercise that should be a part of normative power and soft power theory. It is one thing to speak of identity constructions and discursive representations. Yet, if the story ends there, it is incomplete. A comparative empirical examination of normative power Europe and soft power China can help further reflection on the two theories. More reflexivity in the theories can make them more useful for understanding rising powers. In my next chapter, I will attempt one such comparison of these two powers as rising global powers.

Chapter 3: Empirics

I. The Contexts

For this chapter, I will investigate the foreign policy practices of China and the EU in two regions: North Africa and Central Asia. North Africa here is the area from Western Sahara in the west, running east to Egypt and Sudan. For my paper, the general focus will be on the countries ringing the Mediterranean Sea (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt). The countries of Central Asia, in no particular order, comprise Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

North Africa



Central Asia



There are several reasons why these two regions are relevant for my research. The EU and China are both active foreign policy actors in these two regions. Although the countries comprising these regions represent a range of political configurations, cultures, histories, economies, and contexts themselves, they do share some degree of regional specificity. Further, China and the EU maintain largely similar relations with countries in the regions. This continuity in policy is important for the sake of this research; it offers a picture of the broader pattern of motives, behaviors, and impacts of China and the EU than is offered by

examining only one country. Finally, the two regions—not necessarily unlike other regions outside China and the EU—represent areas of competition between rising powers, and have been located as such on the mental maps of international politics.⁵³ The two regions are “contested site[s] for competing ‘nodes of governance’”.⁵⁴ As ‘contested’ regions between rising global powers, the two regions provide useful contexts to examine the overlapping foreign policy agency of the two powers as it relates to their normative/soft power.

II. The EU and North Africa

Being in the EU’s ‘backyard’, North Africa is of particular interest to the EU in its external relations. It falls within the Union’s conceptualization of its ‘neighborhood’, and is an area of unique importance and a potential sphere of influence. The region has strong historical ties to Europe that the EU feels engenders a special involvement in the region. This sense of connectedness with the region is part of a European narrative of inclusiveness, which Fernand Braudel (1973) wrote, “depicts the Mediterranean as the cradle of various civilizations, an area where common historical roots favour dialogue, interdependence and region-building”.⁵⁵ While trade links with the region compose less than 5% of the EU’s external trade (2010 levels)⁵⁶, the region is a source of energy resources. It is also a potential source of risks linked to migration, trafficking, terrorism, and instability.⁵⁷ In an attempt to mitigate these risks, and enhance economic linkages and remain a competitive trade partner against China and the US, the EU has attempted to strengthen relations with North Africa

⁵³Kavalski, *Central Asia and the Rise of Normative Powers: Contextualizing the Security Governance of the European Union, China, and India*, 34.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 39.

⁵⁵Michelle Pace, "Norm Shifting from Emp to Enp: The Eu as a Norm Entrepreneur in the South?," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 20, no. 4 (2007): 660.

⁵⁶Juliane Von Reppert-Bismarck, "Analysis: Eu Sets Sights on Deeper North Africa Trade," *Reuters Online*(2011), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/11/us-trade-eu-northafrica-idUSTRE72A4NJ20110311>.

⁵⁷Pace, "Norm Shifting from Emp to Enp: The Eu as a Norm Entrepreneur in the South?"; Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'."

through a series of programs that both encourage enhanced economic integration and the sharing of EU norms to create a more secure and stable neighborhood.

The EU's two main programs for interaction with North African countries, part of its vehicle for normative power in the region, are the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). The former was established at the Barcelona Conference in 1995, and the latter supplemented it 2004.⁵⁸ The original Barcelona Process and resulting EMP was launched with 15 EU members and 14 Mediterranean partners as an, "innovative alliance based on the principles of joint ownership, dialogue and co-operation, seeking to create a Mediterranean region of peace, security and shared prosperity."⁵⁹ The program was composed of three dimensions: Political and Security Dialogue; Economic and Financial Partnership; and Social, Cultural, and Human Partnership. The Political and Security Dialogue is, "aimed at creating a common area of peace and stability underpinned by sustainable development, rule of law, democracy, and human rights."⁶⁰ Therefore, in addition to the stated goal of one day achieving a free trade area between the EU and its Euro-Med partners, the program also incorporates normative goals. The program was re-launched in 2008 as the Union for the Mediterranean.⁶¹ Each of the North African Mediterranean countries except Libya has an Association Agreement (AA) with the EU, the agreement establishing relations through the EMP: Algeria (signed in Apr. 2002; in force Sept. 2005); Egypt (June 2001; June 2004); Morocco (Feb. 1996; Mar. 2000); Tunisia (July 1995; Mar. 1998).⁶² The AAs concluded with partner states, "define the economic, human rights and security dimensions to the relationships on an individual, differentiated basis."⁶³

⁵⁸ Pace, "Norm Shifting from Emp to Enp: The Eu as a Norm Entrepreneur in the South?."

⁵⁹ "Barcelona Declaration ".

⁶⁰ "Euromed," EU External Action, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/euromed/index_en.htm.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² "Countries and Regions: Euro-Mediterranean Partnership," European Commission: DG Trade, <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/regions/euro-mediterranean-partnership/>.

⁶³ Paul James Cardwell, "Euromed, European Neighborhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean: Overlapping Policy Frames in the Eu's Governance of the Mediterranean," *JCMS* 49, no. 2 (2011): 222.

The program works through these bilateral AAs and a series of multilateral co-operation forums, attended by either general and sectoral ministers or senior officials.⁶⁴

The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004. The Commission's stated objective for the program was, "avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and [its] neighbours and instead strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of all."⁶⁵ Through the ENP, the EU and its partners agree to Action Plans (AP), which set out priorities for three to five year periods. Through the Action Plans the EU:

...works together with its partners to develop democratic, socially equitable and inclusive societies, and offers its neighbours economic integration, improved circulation of people across borders, financial assistance and technical cooperation.⁶⁶

The Commission provides grants to partners for implementation of objectives, and the European Investment Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development also provide loans. A Civil Society Facility was created in September 2011 to strengthen civil society.⁶⁷ The ENP functions through positive and negative conditionality based on the performance of partners in implementing ENP objectives. Many of the objectives are related to developing liberal market economies. The governments implementing them were often less concerned with ENP norms than developing sectors that did not necessarily support employment and poverty reduction for lower classes. The EU has ENP strategies for each of the North African Mediterranean states, and Action Plans have been negotiated with Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt.

A third mechanism that serves as a tool for the EU's normative power is the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The program was launched in 2006 with a number of normative objectives: enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental

⁶⁴ Ibid., 225.

⁶⁵ "European Neighborhood Policy," European Commission.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

freedoms; strengthening the role of civil society; supporting actions in areas covered by EU guidelines; supporting international and regional frameworks for human rights, justice, rule of law; promotion of democracy; and enhancing transparency in electoral processes.⁶⁸ For the period 2007-2013 the EIDHR had a budget of €1,104 billion in assistance. The assistance can be used for projects and programs, grants for civil society and organizations, grants to human rights defenders, election observation missions, and public contracts.⁶⁹

The table below in Figure 1⁷⁰ reflects EU financial assistance to the countries of North Africa. for the years 2002-2010.

EU DEVELOPMENT FINANCE 2002-2010

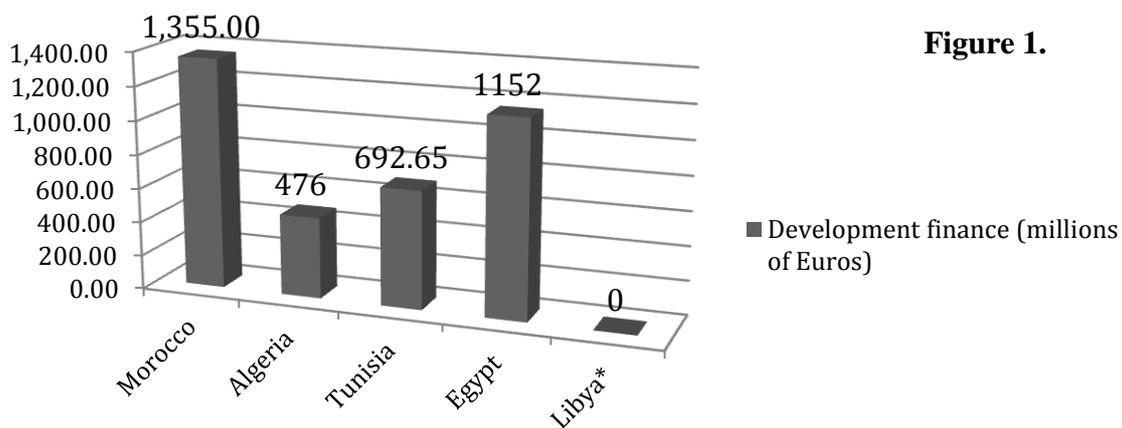


Figure 1.

*Amount for Libya does not reflect finance for Libya; data for Libya was not included, reflecting minimal amounts.

The data is from Country Strategy Reports and National Indicative Programs published through the Commission, documents laying out objectives and planned aid for each EU partner country. Aid per capita to Morocco and Tunisia was notably higher than to Egypt and Algeria. Aid to Libya is not included; until 2010, cooperation between the EU and

⁶⁸ "European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights (Eidhr)," European Commission: Development and Cooperation- EUROEAID.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

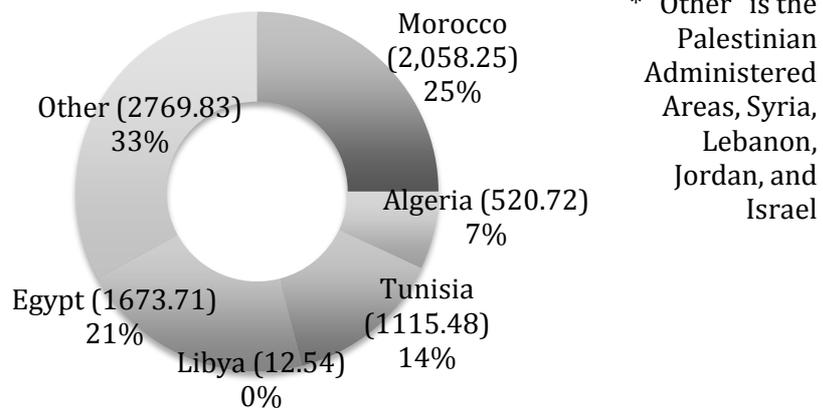
⁷⁰ Vicky Reynaert, "Explaining Eu Aid Allocation in the Mediterranean: A Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis," *Mediterranean Politics* 16, no. 3 (2011): 406.

Libya—as well as aid—was limited mostly to combating illegal immigration and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs.⁷¹

Aid is distributed through a number of programs. MEDA, the main financial instrument for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, was established in 1996 and was modified and renamed MEDA II in 2000.⁷² A second mechanism that supports the ENP is the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), in operation since January 1, 2007.⁷³ Figures 2 shows development aid to the region for the years 1995-2009, including MEDA I and II and the ENPI.⁷⁴

EU'S COUNTRY PROGRAMMABLE AID BY COUNTRY, 1995-2009 (MILLIONS OF EUROS)

Figure 2.



From 1995-2009, Morocco received nearly a quarter of EU aid, Egypt received 21%, Tunisia 14%, and Algeria 7%. The higher amounts of aid for Morocco and Egypt may reflect the larger populations and economies of these countries. It may also be related to the larger

⁷¹ "Development and Cooperation- Europeaid: Libya," European Commission

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/libya/libya_en.htm.

⁷² "Meda Program," European Institute for Research on Mediterranean and Euro-Arab Cooperation,

<http://www.mede.be/en/themes/euro-mediterranean-cooperation/meda-programme/>.

⁷³ "Development and Cooperation- Europeaid: European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument ", European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/enpi_en.htm.

⁷⁴ "Eu Development Funding in the Southern Mediterranean: Diagnosis and Prospects," (Brussels: The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), 2011).

role the two play in the security objectives of the EU. Egypt is a large Arab country with strong influence in the region, and a large number of Moroccans work in the EU. Nearly 10% of Morocco's 32 million citizens live in Europe and presumably rely on remittances.⁷⁵

What have been the impact of these various initiatives on partner countries and the normative power of the EU? Cardwell suggests that the effectiveness of the EU's policies in the region is limited due to "overlapping policy frames"⁷⁶ between the EMP, ENP, and Union for the Mediterranean. The multiple arrangements of multilateral and bilateral relations limits coherence in policy and leaves partner states unable to become active participants in bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Prior to the Arab Spring in 2011, the EU's democratization efforts, "follow[ed] a top-down approach with the biggest programmes EMP and ENP mainly engaging in state capacity building,"⁷⁷ which reflected a larger tendency of the EU to focus on state capacity building. Indeed, "Since the enactment of the Barcelona Process, OECD DAC data record a total commitment for support for NGOs of merely €1 million," before 2011.⁷⁸ This had led to criticism from civic groups in North Africa that they had been left out of the process. A joint statement in May 2011, issued by 76 civil society organizations in the Middle East and North Africa, called for changes to the Western conditionality aid system:

Egyptian and Tunisian people revolted against unjust economic models that had left the vast majorities of these populations destitute and marginalized in their own economies through decades of inappropriate policies prescribed and imposed by the very same international actors that are called upon today to facilitate the transition.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Guy Taylor, "Europe's Woes Spark Challenges for Morocco: Nation Relies on Remittances," *The Washington Times* (2012), <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jun/14/european-woes-spark-challenges-for-moroccans/?page=all>.

⁷⁶ Cardwell, "Euromed, European Neighborhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean: Overlapping Policy Frames in the Eu's Governance of the Mediterranean," 236.

⁷⁷ Daniela Huber, "Democracy Assistance in the Middle East and North Africa: A Comparison of Us and Eu Policies," *Mediterranean Politics* 13, no. 1 (2008).

⁷⁸ "Eu Development Funding in the Southern Mediterranean: Diagnosis and Prospects."

⁷⁹ "A Call of Civil Society Organizations from the Arab Region and International Groups against Diverting the Revolutions' Economic and Social Justice Goals through Conditionalities Imposed by the Imf, Wb, Eid and Ebrd," (Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), 2011).

Following the Arab Spring, this problem became evident and the EU began to reassess its engagements in the region and direct more resources to civic engagement. Brussels' response continues to be framed by the ENP. The ENP budget was boosted from €5.7 billion to €6.9 billion, yet the framework was altered from "conditionality" to "more for more". The principle was that, "in future and in contrast with... "conditionality" of the past, European support would depend upon genuine democratic progress."⁸⁰ Thus after reflecting on policy shortcomings of the past, the EU attempted to reconfigure its policies to address new dynamics in the region.

Finally, I will look at some research on perceptions of the EU from populations in the region. One study providing a glimpse of the impact of the ENP in partner countries is a 2007 study by Annegret Bendiek. Bendiek's 2008 paper *The ENP: Visibility and Perceptions in the Partner Countries*⁸¹ measured "visibility" as a reflection of the degree of awareness of the EU, and found that visibility of the EU and its ENP was high in Tunisia and Morocco, but low in Egypt, Libya, and Algeria. This could be linked to the policies of governments in the latter countries prior to the Arab Spring, which created a distance between governments and populations and provided for little transparency in governance. Perceptions of the EU were measured as "interpretations and misinterpretations of the EU's motives for launching and conducting its policies".⁸² The measurements reflected perceptions of the credibility of the EU's attempts at supporting democratic processes, as well as support from non-governmental actors (opposition parties, the media, economic actors, the general public). The study found that respondents perceived the EU as having, "only rhetorical commitments to participatory democracy" in Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia, and, "not even rhetorical commitment" in Libya.

⁸⁰ Nick Witney and Anthony Dworkin, "A Power Audit of Eu-North Africa Relations," (London, UK: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2012).

⁸¹ Annegret Bendiek, "The Enp: Visibility and Perceptions in the Partner Countries " in *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)* (Berlin: Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit, 2008).

⁸² *Ibid.*, 4.

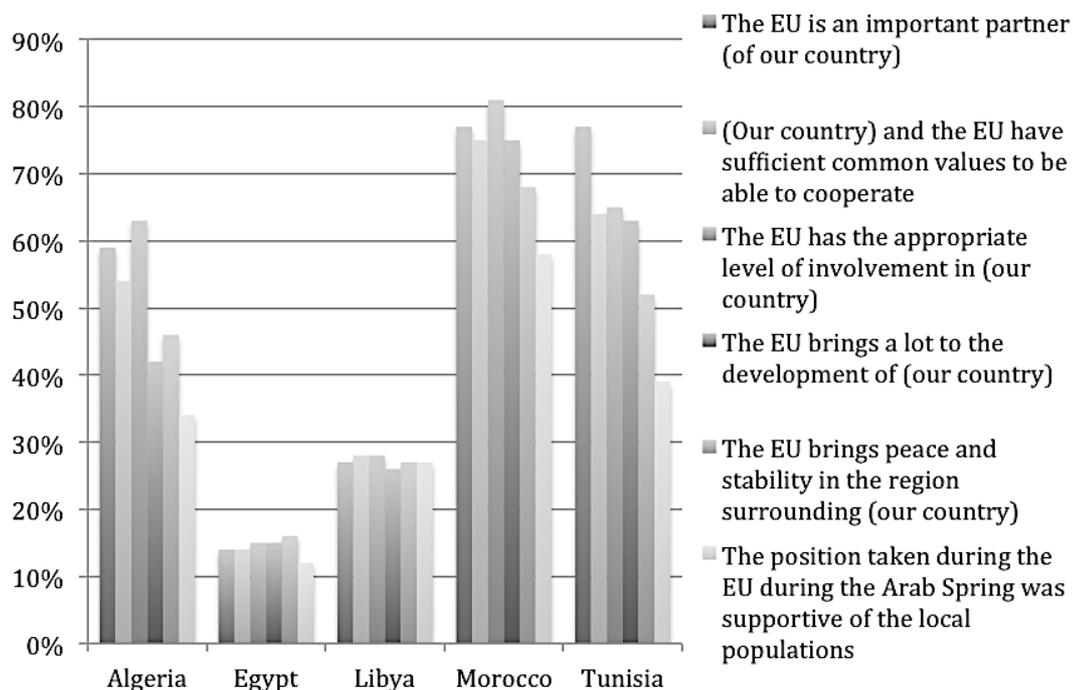
Only Moroccan respondents believed the EU played a “supportive” roll in democratic transition.

A more recent study by the *EU Neighborhood Barometer*, published in March 2013, offers some data on perceptions of the EU post Arab Spring. The interviews for the data were conducted with around 1,000 interviewees from each Neighborhood country in late 2012.⁸³ The results for the five Mediterranean ENP countries are below in Figure 3.

As is apparent, there are significant differences between perceptions of the EU’s role and involvement between Egypt and Libya on one hand and Morocco, Tunisia, and—to a lesser extent—Algeria on the other. Despite significant amounts of development aid to Egypt prior to the Arab Spring, respondents had the lowest perceptions of the EU in the country. Libya, the lowest recipient of EU aid and investment, too had relatively negative results.

Figure 3.

"Could you tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning the European Union?" (percent agreeing)



⁸³ "Results of Eu Neighborhood Barometer," EU Neighborhood Barometer, <http://euneighbourhood.eu/>.

Yet the picture is in Morocco and Tunisia is more complex. Polls conducted in 2010 by the EU Neighborhood Info Center with 400 Moroccans from the general public on the policies of the EU revealed that:

- 21% of respondents thought that the policies of the EU had a “positive impact” on the “promotion of peace and stability”
- 14% a “positive impact” on the “provision of development assistance”
- 12% a “positive impact” on the “promotion of good governance”

Conversely, 58% of respondents thought the EU had a positive impact on “investments of the EU in Morocco”, while 40% thought they had a positive impact on the promotion of trade.⁸⁴ A poll taken the same year in Tunisia among 100 opinion leaders and 405 ordinary Tunisians revealed that only 32% of opinion leaders and 61% of the general public thought the EU “contributed to the promotion of democracy”, while 90% of opinion leaders and 63% of the general public believed that while the EU aids Tunisia, it will “especially seek to ensure its own prosperity”.⁸⁵

These low perceptions could be a result of the EU’s failure to engage with civil society actors and its willingness to work with authoritarian governments before the Arab Spring. The failure to engage with civil society might also be the reason for the general perception among all countries that the EU’s position taken during the Arab Spring was not supportive of local population. This is a point I will return to later in the analysis chapter.

III. China and North Africa

China views its relationship with North Africa, and Africa in general, as having broad potential. China’s experience of development, paired with a more hands-off approach to

⁸⁴ "Les Marocains Estiment Qu'ils Partagent Des Valeurs Clés Avec L'ue," in *L'UE telle qu'elle est perçue dans les pays partenaires de la Politique européenne de voisinage* (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), 2010).

⁸⁵ "Imposante Et Douce, Comme Un Éléphant," in *L'UE telle qu'elle est perçue dans les pays partenaires de la Politique européenne de voisinage* (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), 2010).

development aid, is more appealing to African leaders than Western involvement in the continent. China too has historical linkages with the continent, dating back to trade links from the 3rd century AD.⁸⁶ China's historical approach to North Africa—as Chinese leaders are eager to point out—has been characterized by more by influence and exchange than conflict or colonization.⁸⁷ Both North Africa and China have had historical experiences with colonialism and imperialism, followed by neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism that created perceptions of the West as an imposing and denigrating force attempting to assert its model of human rights and democracy.⁸⁸ In the 1990s, both China and North Africa gained greater import for each other. Following the violence of Tiananmen Square in 1989, China found itself denounced by the West and the focus of intense criticism over its human rights record. With its “fragile relations” with the West, China turned to Africa with “renewed emphasis”.⁸⁹ China's rapid development also fueled an insatiable appetite for resources that the countries of the region had plenty of. In China, the countries of North Africa found a partner more willing to provide development aid and investment without the conditionality from the West.

China's soft power policies toward North Africa reflect similarities in its policies with countries in East Africa and the Horn of Africa.⁹⁰ Africa already accounts for 30% of China's oil imports⁹¹. China and Algeria signed an oil and natural gas agreement, and Chinese oil companies have launched the largest investments in the country of any country in Africa.⁹² “China's presence in North Africa is expanding rapidly as both an important trading partner

⁸⁶David H. Shinn, "China's Approach to East, North, and the Horn of Africa," in *China's Global Influence: Objectives and Strategies* (Washington, DC, USA: US-China Economic and Security Review Commission 2005).

⁸⁷Jennifer G. Cooke, "China's Soft Power in Africa," in *Chinese Soft Power and Its Implications for the United States: Competition and Cooperation in the Developing World*, ed. Carola McGiffert (Washington DC, US: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009), 31; Sanusha Naidu, "China-Africa Relations in the 21st Century: A "Win-Win" Relationship," in *Current African Issues*, ed. Henning Melber (Stockholm, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2007), 42.

⁸⁸Daisy Mbazima and Sanusha Naidu, "China-Africa Relations: A New Impulse in a Changing Continental Landscape," *Futures* 40(2008): 750-51.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 750.

⁹⁰Shinn, "China's Approach to East, North, and the Horn of Africa."

⁹¹Mbazima and Naidu, "China-Africa Relations: A New Impulse in a Changing Continental Landscape," 753.

⁹²Eugenia Pecoraco, "China's Strategy in North Africa: New Economic Challenges for the Mediterranean Region," in *EUGOV* (Barcelona, Spain: Institut Universitari d'Estudis Europeus, 2010), 12.

and increasingly as an investor into the region.”⁹³ Between 2005 and 2013, China invested \$18.8 billion dollars in the region. Figure 4 below reflects Chinese investment in the two largest sectors in each country listed, making up most investment to those countries. No investment was recorded in Morocco and Tunisia during the period.

CHINESE INVESTMENT IN NORTH AFRICA, 2005-2013 (MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)

Figure 4.

	Leading Sector	Amount
Algeria	Transportation	\$8,800
	Real Estate	\$1,300
Libya	Transportation	\$2,600
	Real Estate	\$1,700
Egypt	Energy	\$2,000
	Metals	\$940

*Source: *The Heritage Foundation*⁹⁴

The region is a huge market for Chinese textiles and light manufacturing goods. Local production in Morocco by Chinese companies allows selling to the huge EU market without barriers, thanks to Morocco’s trade agreements with the EU.⁹⁵ Thanks to Algeria’s huge foreign exchange reserves, the country has become “the primary market for Chinese construction”, and China is involved in large transfers of money to Algeria’s banks for which the banks offer “the benefit of financing projects without too many restrictions”.⁹⁶ The region as a whole is a newer market for Chinese goods due to “industrial overproduction and market

⁹³ Chris Alden and Faten Aggad-Clerx, "Chinese Investments and Employment Creation in Algeria and Egypt," in *AfDB-BAfD Economic Brief* (African Development Bank, 2012), 1.

⁹⁴ "China Global Investment Tracker Map," Heritage Foundation, <http://www.heritage.org/research/projects/china-global-investment-tracker-interactive-map>.

⁹⁵ Pecoraco, "China's Strategy in North Africa: New Economic Challenges for the Mediterranean Region," 11.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

saturation in several sectors”.⁹⁷ China also provides significant aid and construction assistance in infrastructure development in the region, as well as investing large amounts in manufacturing and assembly plants.⁹⁸

The most important forum for China-Africa relations, including with North Africa, is the *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation*, launched in Beijing in 2000. The forum takes place every two years, with the 5th Ministerial Meeting held place in Beijing in 2012.⁹⁹ The forum aims to enhance political exchange, economic and trade cooperation, and cultural exchange.¹⁰⁰ Among other commitments from the 5th meeting, China pledged to give approximately 76 millions euros in aid to the African Union within three years, as well as the, “use of the grants, interest-free loans and concessional loans to help the development of African countries.”¹⁰¹ In the meeting’s Action Plan, African countries expressed appreciation for, “China’s longstanding development assistance in diverse forms, which contributed to Africa’s economic and social development.”¹⁰²

China’s development aid to the countries in the region from 2002-2010 is reflected in Figure 5¹⁰³ on the next page.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁹⁸ Alden and Aggad-Clerx, "Chinese Investments and Employment Creation in Algeria and Egypt," 1.

⁹⁹ "The 5th Ministerial Meeting of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation," CCTV, <http://english.cntv.cn/special/5thfocac/homepage/index.shtml>.

¹⁰⁰ "Forum on China-Africa Cooperation," FOCAC, <http://www.focac.org/eng/>.

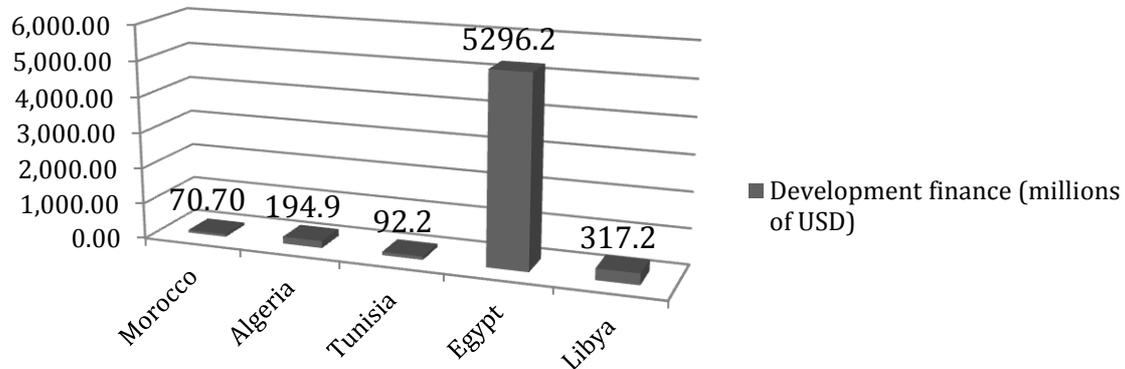
¹⁰¹ "The 5th Ministerial Meeting of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation".

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ AidData, "Tracking Chinese Development Finance to Africa," ed. AidData (2012-2013). AidData developed a *media-based data collection (MBDC)* methodology to systematically collect open-source information about development finance flows from suppliers that do not publish their own project-level data. In 2012 and early 2013, they used these methods to create a detailed project-level database of official Chinese development finance flows to Africa from 2000 to 2011.

Figure 5.

CHINESE DEVELOPMENT FINANCE 2002-2010



*Amounts include Chinese official and unoffical amounts, not including military aid.

**Amounts have been adjsuted to 2009 dollar value by source.

Chinese development financing to Egypt was tremendously greater than to other countries in the region. In addition to being a huge market for Chinese goods, Egypt offers access to the Suez Canal, and contributing to Egypt's development would ideally foster good will among Arab countries in the region amid criticism of China's support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.¹⁰⁴ It should be noted that Chinese aid to Libya and Egypt declined sharply in 2011. This was an expression of China's unhappiness with the Arab Spring movements—and the fear that they would inspire a similar uprising in China—and Western support for regime change.¹⁰⁵

China's growing involvement in the region goes beyond development financing. Before September 2012, China already had over \$500 million (nearly €398 million at 2012 levels) of investments in Egypt. The investments were made during the Mubarak era, but kept to a low by Egypt because of its US patronage.¹⁰⁶ Companies that stayed behind in Egypt

¹⁰⁴ Erin Cunningham, "Is China 'Buying' Egypt from the Us?," *Global Post*(2012).

¹⁰⁵ Jonathan D. Pollack, "Unease from Afar," (2011), <http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2011/11/18-arab-awakening-china-pollack>.

¹⁰⁶ Cunningham, "Is China 'Buying' Egypt from the Us?".

after the revolution made most of the investments. Between 1989 and 2008, China sold more weapons to Egypt than any other country in Africa.¹⁰⁷ The two countries also saw a ten-fold increase in trade from 1999-2009¹⁰⁸, and topped \$7 billion (€5.39 billion) in 2010.¹⁰⁹ China invested more than \$1.5 billion in Algeria in the decade before 2013, was granted \$20 billion in contracts by the Algerian government, and trade between the two surpassed \$200 billion in 2002.¹¹⁰ China's trade volume with Morocco exceeded \$3.69 billion in 2012 (€2.84 billion), making China Morocco's third largest trading partner.¹¹¹ Following China's soft power narrative, many of its investments in the region have been without conditions. They have often been focused in infrastructure projects and in manufacturing, areas where the region has been in great need.

What of perceptions of China from the region? Data on North African populations' perceptions of China are difficult to come by. One public opinion poll completed in 2009 found that 62% of interviewed Egyptians had a "Mainly positive" view of China's influence, as opposed to 11% who had a mainly negative view.¹¹² The same poll conducted in 2012 found that 50% of Egyptians had a "Mainly positive" view while 25% had a "Mainly negative".¹¹³ Aside from this poll, data on perceptions of China was hard to find. However, statements by African leaders and scholars may offer a glimpse. Adams Bodomo, a University of Hong Kong professor from Ghana, had this to say of African opinion of Chinese approaches to region:

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ahmed Kandil, "China and the "Arab Spring": A New Player in the Middle East?," in *EuroMesco* (European Institute of the Mediterranean 2012).

¹⁰⁹ "China Pledges \$20bn in Credit for Africa at Summit," *BBC News*(2012), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-18897451>.

¹¹⁰ "China Invested \$1.5bn in Algeria in a Decade: Envoy," *Morocco World News*(2013), <http://www.morocoworldnews.com/2013/04/86762/china-invested-1-5bn-in-algeria-in-a-decade-envoy/>.

¹¹¹ "China 3rd Trading Partner of Morocco," Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in China, <http://www.moroccoembassy.cn/En/NewsView.asp?ID=404&SortID=29>.

¹¹² BBC World Service, "Views of China and Russia Decline in Global Poll," (BBC World Service, 2009).

¹¹³ "Views of Europe Slide Sharply in Global Poll, While Views of China Improve," (BBC World Service, 2012).

Words like brotherhood, independence, we will respect your integrity and sovereignty, these are very important for Africa. In contrast with some other parts of the world where leaders come over and say Africa must do this, using the word ‘must do this’, kind of imposing. [President Xi Jinping is] talking the language that Africans like because they feel people who respect them people, who consider them as equal partners, that is something that we Africans will look up to.¹¹⁴

And in an interview with Amr Moussa in 2006, the Secretary General of the Arab League had generally positive things to say about China’s role in the region:

The Arab world is interested in conducting dialogues with highly-valued Chinese civilization since the relations between the Arab world and China are based on mutual understanding and agreements, rather than on conflicts and groundless accusations.¹¹⁵

However, there is also a growing perception that North Africa countries need to take more caution that China’s involvement on the continent is for mutual benefit as its influence increases.¹¹⁶

IV. The EU and Central Asia

For the EU, Central Asia occupies a place outside the Union’s ‘neighborhood’, and outside the EU’s area of potential enlargement. The region also is not a part of the EU’s neighborhood programs like the ENP, and is beyond its “borderland”. It is therefore only recently that the EU has taken an interest in the region:

Owing to the dominant focus on enlargement, the EU’s external policy has been treated largely as coterminous with the transformative potential underwriting the dynamics of accession-driven conditionality. Thereby, it was only recently that the relevance of the EU’s ability to alter the practices of states (outside of the purview and the prospect of membership) has been given serious consideration.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ William Ide, "China Works to Improve Image in Africa," *Voice of America*(2013), http://www.voanews.com/content/china_works_to_improve_image_in_africa_xi/1629730.html.

¹¹⁵ "Interview: Al Chief Hails Arab-Sino Relations," *People's Daily Online*(2006), http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200605/28/eng20060528_269138.html.

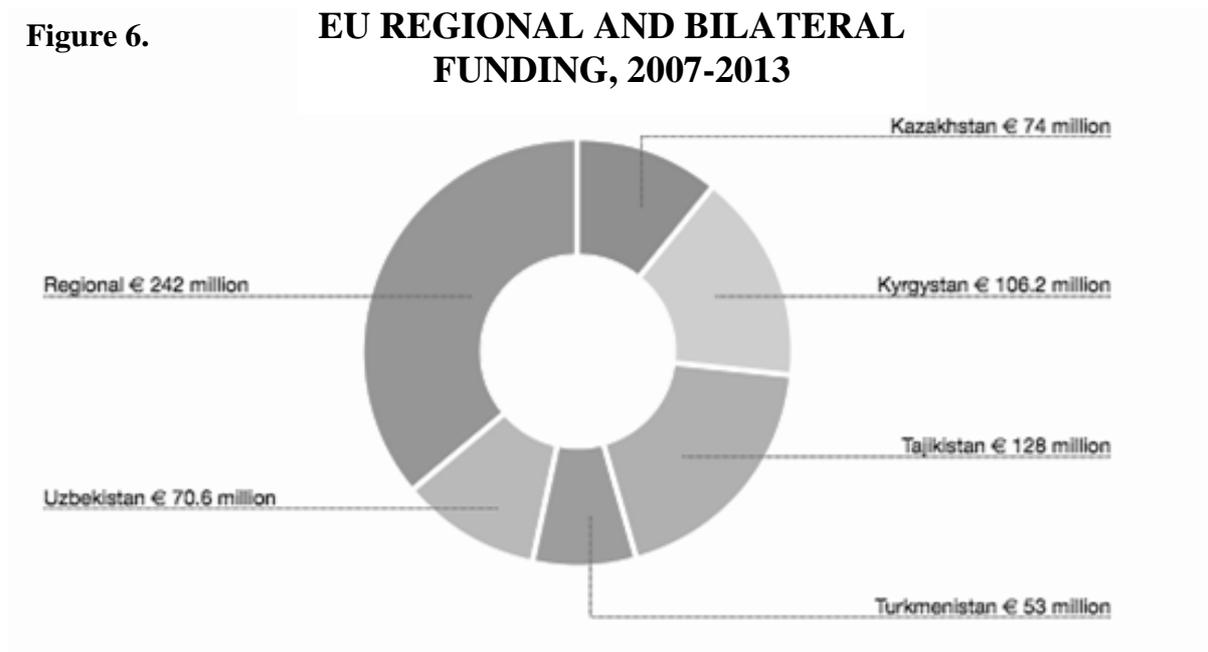
¹¹⁶ "China Works to Improve Image in Africa".

¹¹⁷ Kavalski, *Central Asia and the Rise of Normative Powers: Contextualizing the Security Governance of the European Union, China, and India*, 78.

Because of this dynamic, the EU's normative goals in the region are a newly emerging aspect of its foreign policy there. In its *Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia* in 2007, the European Council established a framework for building relations in seven policy areas: human rights; education; rule of law; energy; transport; environment and water; trade and economic relations.¹¹⁸ The *Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007-13* laid out the areas of regional and national cooperation to be developed as well as funding for two periods, 2007-2010 and 2011-2013. The first Central Asia Multi-annual Indicative program had a budget of €352.8 million for the four years, and the second €321 million.¹¹⁹ Figures 6 and 7¹²⁰ below indicate allocations of regional amounts and bilateral funding amounts received by each country and a breakdown of main cooperation sectors.

Figure 6.

EU REGIONAL AND BILATERAL FUNDING, 2007-2013



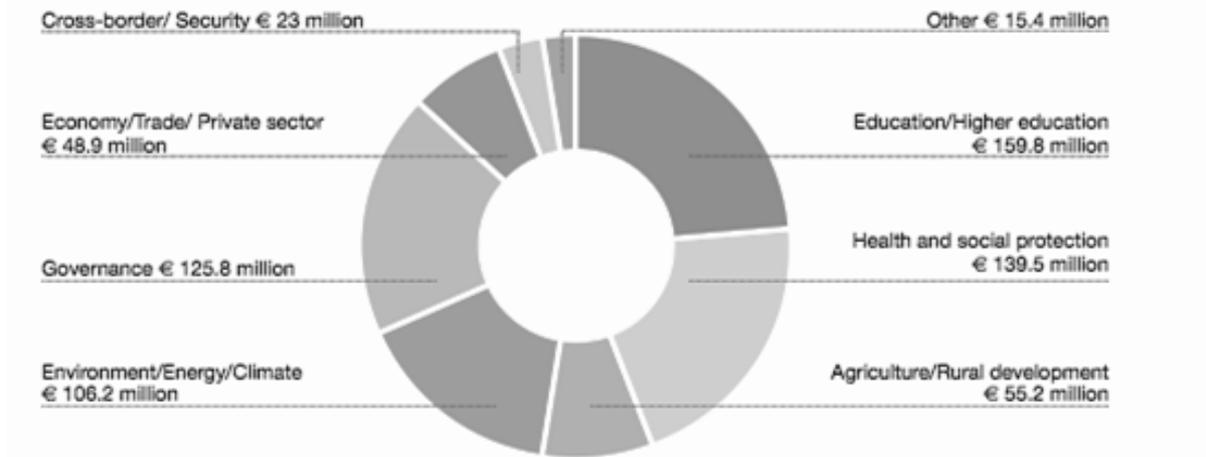
¹¹⁸ "European Union-Central Asia Development Cooperation," (European Commission- EuropeAid, 2011).

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 5-6.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 6.

Figure 7.

EU FUNDING BY MAIN COOPERATION SECTOR, 2007-2013



For the first allocation period, €137 million were allocated for regional programs, while the second period saw €105 in allocations. Three main initiatives at the regional level were the EU-Central Asia Environment and Water Initiative, the EU-Central Asia Rule of Law Initiative, and the Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI).¹²¹ For the first period, 48.4% of regional funds went toward Education/Higher Education, 28.6% toward Environment/Energy/Climate, and 1.4% toward Governance. For the second period, these amounts were 40%, 43.8%, and 1.9% respectively.¹²²

Trade in goods between the EU and Central Asia totaled €19 billion in 2009, €24 billion in 2010, and €32.1 billion in 2011. The EU is the region's largest trading partner, comprising around a third of its external trade.¹²³ EU FDI to the region has been minimal. The *European Union foreign direct investment yearbook 2008* recorded that FDI outflows to Asia a whole represented only 12% from 2004-2006, while Central Asia was not included in

¹²¹ Ibid., 10.

¹²² Ibid., 11.

¹²³ "European Commission Trade, Countries and Regions: Central Asia," European Union, <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/regions/central-asia/>.

the Asia breakdown due to its low levels of FDI. For total FDI outward assets in 2006, Asia as a whole represented only 14% with Central Asia again not represented.¹²⁴

Again, the EU's involvement in the region began to expand in the early 2000s, and so its regional and country-specific programs are still emerging. Its trade and investment links have been limited as well. After an extensive search, data concerning the perceptions of the EU and its engagement with the region were not found. An analysis of the success of the EU's normative power policies in the region will be provided in the next chapter.

V. China and Central Asia

Central Asia occupies an important part in China's geopolitical, social-spatial calculus. The region had close contact and regular relations with China until it was pulled into the sphere of Czarist Russia and then the Soviet Union. China was effectively shut out from the region until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. After independence, the countries of the region were eager to negotiate boundaries and stability with an emerging China who they felt would take advantage of the great changes taking place.¹²⁵ For its part, China was eager to ensure stability and security at the border of its restive Xinjiang region. It was also an important sphere in which China could further begin to establish its agency as an international power.¹²⁶

China's motivations for involvement in the region consist of a mix of security and soft power concerns. Chinese claims of contributing to a harmonious Central Asia have been buttressed by "five dominant narratives of Beijing's involvement": diversifying and ensuring

¹²⁴ "European Union Foreign Direct Investment Yearbook 2008 ", in *Eurostat Pocketbooks* (Luxembourg: European Communities 2008).

¹²⁵ Chien-peng Chung, "The Shanghai Co-Operation Organization: China's Changing Influence in Central Asia," *The China Quarterly* no. 180 (2004).

¹²⁶ Kavalski, *Central Asia and the Rise of Normative Powers: Contextualizing the Security Governance of the European Union, China, and India*, 113-15.

access to energy resources, cutting international links between Muslim Uyghur separatists in Xinjiang and their kind in Central Asia, preventing diplomatic ties between the region and Taipei, encouraging economic and trade relations, and “indicating China’s preparedness to become a global actor”.¹²⁷ A springboard in relations between China and the region was, “finalizing border settlements between China and the four former Soviet republics, demilitarizing their frontiers, and establishing confidence-building measures.”¹²⁸

China’s main forum for cooperation with Central Asia is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), established with China, the five Central Asian countries, and Russia. The purposes of the SCO, described in the *Declaration of Establishment* are: strengthening mutual trust and good-neighborly friendship among the member states; encouraging effective cooperation among a number of areas; safeguarding regional peace, security and stability; and establishing a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.¹²⁹ The SCO emphasizes mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for multicivilizations, and striving for common development as the “Shanghai Spirit”, the “norm governing relations among the SCO member states”.¹³⁰

The SCO originated out of the Shanghai Five (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan), a summit whose focus was on finalizing border settlements between members but eventually shifted to combating three “evils”—separatism, extremism, and terrorism.¹³¹ After 2004, the SCO began to focus more from regional security on an international outlook, establishing itself as a legitimate international organization. The SCO has increasingly been critical of Western security involvement in the region, preferring to

¹²⁷Ibid., 114.

¹²⁸Robert G. Sutter, in *Chinese Foreign Relations: Power and Policy since the Cold War* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. , 2012), 259.

¹²⁹ "Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," (Shanghai, China: Regional Anti-terrorist Structure (RATS), 2001).

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ 259-61.

deal with security through its members.¹³² A permanent body of the SCO is the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS). China's involvement in such a security cooperation, and its first-ever sponsoring of joint military exercises on its territory, is evidence that China has through the SCO established itself as a key security provider in the region.¹³³

Concerning economics, China traded slightly less than the EU with the region as a whole. Figure 8 shows trade between Central Asia and its three largest trading partners, China, Russia, and the EU:

Figure 8.

TRADE BETWEEN CENTRAL ASIA AND LARGEST PARTNERS*

	2000		2010	
	Billion US\$	% of total exports	Billion US\$	% of total exports
EU	3.7	23.8	31.9	37.7
Russia	3.6	23.3	23.3	16.4
China	0.7	4.8	12.4	19.6

	2000		2010	
	Billion US\$	% of totals imports	Billion US\$	% of total imports
Russia	3.1	27.2	17.2	27.3
EU	2.2	19.0	11.1	17.5
China	0.28	2.4	6.8	10.7

*These numbers include Afghanistan. Afghanistan's portion of exports and imports as part of the region were minimal in 2000. In 2010, Afghani exports made up less than \$0.5 billion, while imports made up \$10 billion, though the US, Pakistan, and Iran, and other partners (not Russia, China, or the EU) composed 84% of this trade.

¹³² Marcel De Haas and Frans-Paul Van der Putten, *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Toward a Full-Grown Security Alliance?* (The Hague, Netherlands: Nederlands Instituut voor Internationale Betrekkingen Clingendael 2007), 7-9.

¹³³ Kavalski, *Central Asia and the Rise of Normative Powers: Contextualizing the Security Governance of the European Union, China, and India*, 117-19.

As is reflected in the table, trade between China and Central Asia made up a very small portion of total trade with the area, yet this proportion grew significantly during the first decade of the 2000s. This increase has been related to China's rapid development and demands for energy resources. The building of new gas and oil pipelines in the late 2000s contributed to the large increase in energy trade between China and the region.

As with the EU, data concerning the perceptions of the China and its engagement with the region were unavailable. China's influence in the SCO is often referred to as evidence of China's growing influence in the region, and the type and areas of cooperation in the SCO are demonstrative of Chinese attempts to construct norms in the region. Drawing from the evidence available, I will provide an analysis of China's soft power in the next chapter.

Chapter 4. Analysis

II. The EU and North Africa

The foreign policies of the EU and China in North Africa, at least on the surface, exemplify the intersection of normative/soft power narratives with real-world policy. At least according to the agreements between the EU and its partners, the EMP, ENP, and various aid mechanisms establish foundations for normative transference from the EU to North African states. They form the backbone of the Union's relations with the region, and can be seen as essentially representative of the EU's attempts at normative agency in the region. Yet, a closer look reveals a more complex picture. Borrowing loosely from the analytic framework suggested by Tocci and others¹³⁴, we can consider the EU's normative goals, means, and impacts in this region. The EU's main goal in establishing a Mediterranean partnership and a neighborhood policy was to mitigate uncertainties and reduce potential dangers coming from what has been constructed as a "securitized" region.¹³⁵ This desire to establish security and stability with the region encompassed economic security through maintenance of trade potentials, as well as more concrete forms of security related to terrorism, migration, and the like.

If one considers the consistency of the normative narrative with the means the EU employs in North Africa—what it actually does—there is much room for improvement. Before the Arab Spring swept through North Africa, the EU had for decades supported

¹³⁴Tocci, *Who Is a Normative Foreign Actor? The European Union and Its Global Partners*.

¹³⁵Jean-Pierre Cassarino, "Reversing the Hierarchy of Priorities in Eu-Mediterranean," in *The European Union and the Arab Spring*, ed. Joel Peters (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2012); Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'; Lorenzo Fioramonti, "Promoting Human Rights and Democracy: A New Paradigm for the European Union," in *The European Union and the Arab Spring* ed. Joel Peters (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2012); Pace, "Norm Shifting from Emp to Enp: The Eu as a Norm Entrepreneur in the South?."

dictators in the region out of a concern to maintain stability.¹³⁶ Cassarino describes a set of priorities in the EU's relations with the region, atop which sat stability and security, and below that were the "dismissible priorities" of human rights and democratization.¹³⁷ These priorities have colored the EU's behavior toward North Africa, even in areas supposedly constitutive of its normative power. For instance, the Association Agreements that the EU agrees to with third countries contain an "essential element" clause that would allow the EU to implement negative measures or break relations for breaches of fundamental principles of the agreements. Yet as of June 2012, the EU had never used these negative measures despite obvious violations of fundamental principles by former North African governments.¹³⁸ The EU again brushed aside normative concerns following the Arab Spring, when it was reluctant to accept refugees fleeing democratic struggles against authoritarian crackdowns in North Africa.¹³⁹ Thus despite the EU's rhetoric of expanding an area of freedom and justice beyond its borders, its priorities have generally reflected the goal of preserving its internality through incorporating North Africa in a series of relationships, "geared at enhancing the ability of the European Union to permeate and control its periphery".¹⁴⁰

The normative impact of the EU in North Africa, its ability to change perceptions and instill norms, is anything but certain. While these countries may have viewed the EU as an important partner, and while people may have believe they share important values with the EU there was not necessarily a view that the EU was genuinely contributing to the norms inscribed in agreements between these countries and the EU.

¹³⁶Frank et al. Dohmen, "The Eu Has Failed the Arab World," *Spiegel Online*(2011); Christoph Schult, "Europe's Double Dealing with Despots," *ibid*.

¹³⁷Cassarino, "Reversing the Hierarchy of Priorities in Eu-Mediterranean," 1-3.

¹³⁸Rosa Balfour, "Eu Conditionality after the Arab Spring," in *EuroMeSCo Annual Conference "A New Mediterranean Political Landscape? The Arab Spring and Euro-Mediterranean Relations"* (Barcelona: European Institute of the Mediterranean 2011), 16.

¹³⁹Dohmen, "The Eu Has Failed the Arab World"; Fiona Ehlers, Mathieu von Rohr, and Christoph Schult, "Refugee Influx Exposes Limitations of European Solidarity," *ibid*.

¹⁴⁰Raffaella A. Del Sarto, "Borderlands: The Middle East and North Africa as the Eu's Southern Buffer Zone," in *Mediterranean Frontiers: Borders, Conflicts and Memory in a Transnational World*, ed. Dimitar Bechev and Kalyso Nicolaidis (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 162.

In Egypt, also a large recipient of aid and investment from the EU, the EU fared quite low in the *Neighborhood Barometer* poll (see Figure 4). The general opinion was that the EU did not play a positive role in the Arab Spring, and that the EU shared insufficient common values with Egypt to cooperate in the country. The EU institutional support of Mubarak before the Arab Spring, and member states' close dealings with other autocratic leaders, most certainly contributed to these perceptions.

The realities on the ground in North Africa do not appear to match up with the narrative provided by normative power theory. If normative power comes from changing perceptions and instilling norms, then the theory and empirics do not add up. Pace has argued that in seeking stability and security, EU actors' efforts have, "focus[ed] on containing change rather than on allowing the necessary change to come about for the flourishing of Mediterranean societies".¹⁴¹ Youngs reported that many Arab commentators and activists "have noted the EU's half-hearted commitment to democracy".¹⁴² Thus the EU has been largely unsuccessful at constructing an identity as a normative power and changing norms. Empirics suggest that in spite of the EMP, ENP, and other normative policies, North Africans generally have not perceived the EU's efforts in promoting its norms to be genuine. What's more, the Arab Spring caught the EU largely off guard. The EU was not a major influence in the revolutions, despite the assumptions of normative power theory about its ability to instill norms. Why this failure?

Many analysts, and more importantly civic actors on the ground in the region, have noted a failure of the EU to reach non-governmental actors and genuinely support 'homegrown' democracy in the region, such as popularly elected Islamic parties.¹⁴³ Part of

¹⁴¹Pace, "Norm Shifting from Emp to Enp: The Eu as a Norm Entrepreneur in the South?," 670.

¹⁴²Richard Youngs, "Europe's Flawed Approach to Arab Democracy," in *Centre for European Reform Essays* (London: Centre for European Reform, 2006), 2.

¹⁴³Francesco Cavatorta, Michelle Pace, and Peter Seeberg, "The Eu's Democratization Agenda in the Mediterranean: A Critical inside-out Approach," *Democratization* 16, no. 1 (2008): 16-17; Fioramonti,

this disconnect with civil society movements contributed to the EU's failure to anticipate or react to the Arab Spring. It also reflects general problems of disconnect between state-level policy engagement and domestically rooted democratization. This disconnect had greatly diminished the EU's normative influence prior to the Arab Spring. It also contributed to EU policies that did not match up to the needs and demands of populations in the region:

Decisions on macro-economic policies, trade, and investment policies should be based on economic and social priorities that the Egyptian and Tunisian people identify through the constitutional processes and various national dialogue platforms that coalesce in comprehensive, rights-based, coherent, and forward-looking national development strategies.¹⁴⁴

The EU's policies, then, suffered from a lack of flexibility and reflexivity from an assumption that EU norms can be easily transferred. A picture emerges that the EU's normative agency in the region has been quite limited. Its approach has suffered from a lack of understanding of what is actually required in the region, inconsistencies between rhetoric and policy and between EU and member state policies, and unequal relations that have treated countries in the region as clients rather than partners.¹⁴⁵

III. China and North Africa

Many Africans relate more to Chinese engagement, appreciating "China's pragmatism and the idea that it comes to Africa as a business partner, not to proselytize or offer charity."¹⁴⁶ The relationships are framed more as a relationship of equals, one more concerned with the region's needs and preferences. China's norms of non-intervention, harmonious and equal relationships, and a focus on development find a comfortable match

"Promoting Human Rights and Democracy: A New Paradigm for the European Union." YounYoungs, "Europe's Flawed Approach to Arab Democracy."

¹⁴⁴ "A Call of Civil Society Organizations from the Arab Region and International Groups against Diverting the Revolutions' Economic and Social Justice Goals through Conditionalities Imposed by the Imf, Wb, Eid and Ebrd."

¹⁴⁵ Witney and Dworkin, "A Power Audit of Eu-North Africa Relations," 13.

¹⁴⁶ Cooke, "China's Soft Power in Africa," 32.

with North Africa leaders. China is not reluctant to offer development assistance in situations where Western governments would not. And China's norm of a harmonious society and mutual respect in relations is preferable to many North African leaders who often perceive Western interventionism going along with development aid.

It would seem that China's foreign power agency in North Africa is more consistent with narratives of soft power. If China soft power operates through the norms of non-intervention, the Chinese development model, and mutual respect, then at a quick glimpse its policies in the region have largely been in-line with soft power discourses. Also, if soft power is meant to arise from the attractiveness of, among other things, a country's political ideas and policies, then China has been successful with its hands-off approach. Yet soft power narratives also focus on changing perceptions and influencing norms. Here, China's soft power is much less certain.

Chinese rhetoric would say that China's motivations in the region are tied to the desire to establish stronger relations with the developing world, a South-South cooperation based on mutual respect and non-intervention while fostering development. China is eager to be seen as a willing partner and donor to the developing world- a helping hand that gives without conditionality. Yet, China's rapid development, its quest for securing resources, and a potentially huge market for consumers goods have been the catalyst for increased Chinese involvement in the region.¹⁴⁷ The fact that China establishes strong relations with North African countries for economic benefit is not necessarily against Chinese narratives of soft power; this is common practice among states. However, in situations where China's self-interests are detrimental to domestic interests, this goes against China's ability to change perceptions or norms. There have been grievances from North Africans over Chinese

¹⁴⁷Pecoraco, "China's Strategy in North Africa: New Economic Challenges for the Mediterranean Region; Sutter, 297. Due to agreements with the EU, China is able to produce goods domestically in North African countries, and then take advantage of preferential trade arrangements. The area also acts as a testing platform for products before export to European markets.

involvement in the region: China has been disproportionately benefiting from agreements; China doesn't employ enough local labor, not helping reduce unemployment¹⁴⁸; Chinese goods and vendors are outselling and washing out local businesses¹⁴⁹; and countries in the region have huge trade deficits with China. These grievances do not fit well with a soft power narrative of harmonious engagement and an emphasis on development. And while a range of opinions from government officials and policy makers may reflect optimism about China's role, there is less certainly about China's impact in changing perceptions among populations.

Here, Chinese soft power suffers from some of the same shortcomings as the EU's normative power attempts. Namely, China's efforts in the region have over-focused on fostering relations with North African leaders, largely neglecting non-states actors and African populations.¹⁵⁰ Naidu describes a "myopic" soft power diplomacy that suffers from three inherent flaws: it treats the African state as homogenous; it assumes that elites have legitimacy; and it fails to recognize the role of non-state actors and the power that they wield.¹⁵¹ Thus, while China has been working with North African elites in establishing business and trade links, and channeling development aid into infrastructure building, the benefits to Africans on the ground have sometimes not been the first priority. Further, the domestic strains in many countries linked to competition with cheap Chinese imports and exports, and cheap Chinese labor and small-business owners, has left China with a developing image problem. While China's soft power may win over elites eager to maintain their holds on power, it may not have the same effect on the region's citizenry.

¹⁴⁸Lola Horta, "China in Africa: Soft Power, Hard Results," *Yale Global Online*(2009); Alden and Aggad-Clerx, "Chinese Investments and Employment Creation in Algeria and Egypt; Horta, "China in Africa: Soft Power, Hard Results".

¹⁴⁹"China in Africa: Soft Power, Hard Results".

¹⁵⁰Ibid; Mbazima and Naidu, "China-Africa Relations: A New Impulse in a Changing Continental Landscape; Naidu, "China-Africa Relations in the 21st Century: A "Win-Win" Relationship."

¹⁵¹"China-Africa Relations in the 21st Century: A "Win-Win" Relationship," 44.

IV. The EU and Central Asia

Occupying as it does the crossroads of East and West, European and Asian, Christian and Muslim, Central Asia has historically, “tended to be othered as the context for [outsiders] external agency...whether they be Muslim or Christian, European or Asian”.¹⁵² The region has emerged as a “*context* for the international agency of normative powers,”¹⁵³ an area for the emergence of, “competing ‘nodes of governance’—externally promoted strategies aimed at the transmission of rules, produced elsewhere.”¹⁵⁴ The EU and China attempt to exercise their agency as normative/soft powers in the region. Only recently have *regional* players began exerting their preferences in this area often characterized as the “New Great Game”.

Despite the EU’s *Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia*, and its recent attempts at establishing normative agency in region, it is unclear to what extent the EU has succeeded in changing perceptions or norms. No data has been produced to display the success levels of the EU’s policies in the region. But analyses of the Union’s normative power in region can begin to provide an overview.

One barrier to the EU’s success may lie in the contradictions between the EU’s normative commitments and its economic, defense, and security interests. Isaacs addresses these contradictions in his report on the Rule of Law Initiative:

The emphasis [in the EU’s policy] on commercial and trade law reform and building a transparent legal framework for the development of a market economy suggests there is more interest in trade benefits and energy security than in the human rights and good governance benefits of rule of law reform.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵²Kavalski, *Central Asia and the Rise of Normative Powers: Contextualizing the Security Governance of the European Union, China, and India*, 30.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*, 29. (emphasis in original)

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁵⁵Rico Isaacs, "The Eu's Rule of Law Initiative in Central Asia," in *EU-Central Asia Monitoring* (Madrid, Spain: Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), 2009), 4.

Again, it is uncertain to what extent the EU prioritizes normative concerns over those linked to security and stability. Also, the EU's policy in the region is "overstretched and needs to be embedded further in the region by increasingly fostering local ownership."¹⁵⁶ Its efforts have been characterized by a lack of focus on normative issues and a prevailing focus on security and stability. Also, the Union's budget for relations with the area is insufficient, "difficult to manage and...often not transparent."¹⁵⁷ However, Kavalski points to a deeper problem with the EU's relations with the region: an "entrapment *by* and *within* the cognitive frameworks of its strategic culture."¹⁵⁸ Brussels' past attempts at normative power have been limited to areas connected to its project of integration. This has limited its ability to operate as a normative power outside these areas:

Brussels does not seem capable of formulating relations with countries beyond the realms of membership and privileged partnership that would sustain the ideational underpinnings of its normative power, which still remains attuned to the specificities of the project of Europeanizing integration.¹⁵⁹

Put another way, the EU doesn't yet possess the cognitive tools necessary to underpin its normative power in regions that are outside the area of European integration. It is the Union that needs to adapt its agency to Central Asia. The Union approaches the area unreflectively, ignoring the "systemic reality"¹⁶⁰ of Central Asia and lacking an understanding of the complexity of the area. Isaacs also writes of the incongruence of EU policies with the region, "...what genuine impact can such [Rule of Law Initiative] programmes have on the highly personalized legal systems...that do not support transparent, rational and independent action?"¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶Jos Boonstra, "The Eu's Interests in Central Asia: Integrating Energy, Security and Values into Coherent Policy," in *EDC2020* (Madrid, Spain: Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), 2011), 2.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁵⁸Kavalski, *Central Asia and the Rise of Normative Powers: Contextualizing the Security Governance of the European Union, China, and India*, 84. (emphasis in original)

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁶¹Isaacs, "The Eu's Rule of Law Initiative in Central Asia," 4.

With these shortcomings, the EU's normative impact in the region has translated into, "few positive changes in the field of democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law."¹⁶² Kavalski concludes that the EU has emerged as only a "bit player" in the region, with "very limited impact and leverage on Central Asian affairs"¹⁶³. Further, it is limited in its role because, "its position of authority is not *recognized* by Central Asian actors."¹⁶⁴ Given the ineffectiveness of the EU's normative initiatives in Central Asia, and a lack of reflection of the appropriateness of its norms for the region—it is difficult to imagine the EU having had much success in altering perceptions of its role or influencing transitions in norms.

V. China and Central Asia

China's soft power agency in Central Asia has been guided by what Brantly Womack has called a "logic of relationships".¹⁶⁵ Its foreign policy toward the region emphasizes harmonious relationships and a culture of respect that leads to mutual benefit for both countries. This is in contrast to the EU's "logic of appropriateness"¹⁶⁶, a foreign policy framed by the notion that the EU should inform normativity through its agency. China's policy is said to aspire to relationships based on, "unity and cooperation realized through mutual respect and confidence by countries with different civilization backgrounds and traditional cultures".¹⁶⁷ The SCO emphasizes these values, as well as, "mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality...respect for multicivilizations".¹⁶⁸

¹⁶²Boonstra, "The Eu's Interests in Central Asia: Integrating Energy, Security and Values into Coherent Policy," 6.

¹⁶³Kavalski, *Central Asia and the Rise of Normative Powers: Contextualizing the Security Governance of the European Union, China, and India*, 98.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.* (emphasis in original)

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 106.

¹⁶⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷"Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization."

¹⁶⁸*Ibid.*

While Chinese soft power narratives speak of mutual development and harmonious society (both domestically and globally), we can see that its motives in Central Asia are still laced with utilitarian concerns. With governments in the region, China may indeed establishing a degree of soft power, establishing relations based on non-interference in domestic affairs. And indeed, relations built more on dialogue and mutual understandings are indicative of Chinese soft power. Yet other motives reveal a less normative side to Chinese agency in the region. Establishing relations for the sake of isolating the Uighur minority hardly bodes well with a harmonious society. And part of the role of the SCO has been to create a multi-polar world, and “undermine what the Chinese perceive to be American global domination”.¹⁶⁹ This runs contrary to Chinese rhetoric of a “peaceful rise” in a harmonious international system in which China is opposed to challenging an existing global order, or creating alternative hegemons.

China’s focus has been on fostering patterns of behavior in interaction, “the *norms* for the normal are no longer defined by the leading state in terms of ‘rights and obligations’, but emerge as ‘behavioral standards’.”¹⁷⁰ In this way, the countries of the region are more able to exercise their own agencies as equals to China. This is especially important for Central Asia. Womack describes this as China’s “cardinal value”, so that, “by lavishing attention to countries ‘that normally do not get much respect,’ China sets itself apart as a different kind of actor.”¹⁷¹ For a region that has been the context for the Great Game, an area where external powers attempt to substantiate their agencies as global powers, China’s mutuality approach allows the opportunity for regional players to have a say in exchanges with the outside. In this context, China’s soft power narrative of mutual respect and harmonious interactions is reflected in China’s agency.

¹⁶⁹Chung, "The Shanghai Co-Operation Organization: China's Changing Influence in Central Asia," 993.

¹⁷⁰Kavalski, *Central Asia and the Rise of Normative Powers: Contextualizing the Security Governance of the European Union, China, and India*, 107. (emphasis in original)

¹⁷¹Ibid., 106.

China's soft power impact in Central Asia—and presumably perceptions among the elite—has gained success due to its respect in relations with regional actors, and a deliberate foreign policy more amenable to regional needs. In contrast to the EU, which lacks “both a motivation for a policy practice of socialization (beyond its enlargement and enlargement-like initiatives),” China's deliberate policy of establishing security governance is accompanied by “respect for the other”. China has been able to initiate patterns of cooperation with regional actors, prioritizing its own security needs, while being careful not to deny the agency of domestic actors.¹⁷² For Central Asia, this has been a much more amenable platform for interaction with external actors than models of regionalism offered by other powers, “closed, identity-based, ideologically buttressed by liberal democratic values, and presumably out-dated.”¹⁷³ Thus while little data exists from polls or statements by officials, China's soft power in the region is more visible as its preferred norms of interaction have taken hold, while also fitting the desires of regional players.

Whether similar weaknesses exist for China and the EU with relations to civil society and populations (as is the case in North Africa) is an area that requires more research. At least with what has been discussed here, it seems likely that China has been more successful in fostering state-to-state relations through establishing its norms for interaction. The impact of the EU's normative power and China's soft power will certainly become clearer as more data becomes available.

VI. The Broader Picture

What does this all of this say about discussions of normative or soft power? It shows us first of all that theories of normative or soft power are not thorough enough in their

¹⁷²Ibid., 160-61.

¹⁷³Chung, "The Shanghai Co-Operation Organization: China's Changing Influence in Central Asia," 993.

evaluations of these rising powers. The complexities of the contexts in which these powers operate are not simply arenas for their normative agency. The motives of these powers in these regions are utilitarian as well as normative, an assumption that can be made of rising powers in general. Merlingen alludes to this lack of conceptual clarity in the “mechanics of power in the articulation and deployment” of normative power.¹⁷⁴ Normative and soft power theories don’t well confront utilitarian aspects of power. What the discourses contribute to these powers’ foreign policies is a legitimizing identity, a power narrative that attempts to positively reinforce the agency of these actors in foreign contexts. It may or may not be that the EU or China is actually pursuing soft or normative power; what these discourses do is provide the narrative for their agency. Yet the reality is that the assumption of the normative or soft power goals of these two actors deserves more investigation.

In addition to assessing the motives of China and the EU, it is also necessary to consider the impacts of these powers. The presumption that they have such normative or soft power in foreign contexts is too one-sided; it doesn’t consider the agency of the ‘other’, the existing norms, the motives of the other in the relationship, the adaptability of the EU and China’s norms to the native culture. China’s soft power in these two regions may be more successful because its norms are more amenable to local contexts. But again, for normative and soft power it is not only the success of these normative policies that leads to normative/soft power. It is also identity and perceptions that are important for these rising powers. Considering the importance of identity for normative and soft power narratives, there is surprisingly little that has been said of those perceptions in foreign contexts. Discursive representations of the EU and China constructed in literature from the EU and China doesn’t by its virtue change perceptions abroad. The discursive representation must take hold with the other.

¹⁷⁴ Merlingen, "Everything Is Dangerous: A Critique of 'Normative Power Europe'," 437-38.

To improve discussions of soft and normative power, a better look at the ‘other’ is certainly necessary. As rising powers attempt to change norms in the external relations an understanding of the other is essential. It provides a more thorough and well-rounded discussion of the agency of these powers, and in effect a more informed understanding of the contexts in which rising powers attempt to influence norms. A more informed understanding can lead to better policy and perhaps a stronger parallel between theory and actual normative and soft power.

Conclusion

A close look at normative power and soft power theory reveals that the two theories share some similarities. There are of course differences between the EU's norms and China's. The EU promotes its core norms of peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, and human rights and its minor norms of social progress, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance. China is concerned with respect for sovereignty, a Chinese development model not based on conditionality; and mutual respect for differences in political system and culture.

Yet there are shared assumptions that are important. The theories are concerned with identity constructions. Normative or soft powers are able to shape perceptions of their power and alter norms abroad. Along with this is the construction of the other as a context for the agency of these powers. The other becomes the context in which normative or soft powers can legitimize their foreign power agency. However, both theories neglect to thoroughly consider the empirical realities of these types powers in foreign contexts. They neglect to consider the other and the actual success of normative or soft powers in changing perceptions and influencing norms.

A look at the policies of China and the EU in North Africa and Central Asia reveals that these two normative/soft powers have invested largely in these regions. The EU gave over €1.36 billion to Morocco alone from 2002-2010, and an additional €2.32 billion to the rest of North Africa, while China more than €4 billion euros during the same time, mostly to Egypt. The EU has in recent years worked to establish regional and country-specific program with Central Asia, while China has used the SCO to establish itself as a key player in the region.

Despite their involvement in these regions, there is little evidence to support the claim that either the EU or China has been successful at changing norms and perceptions on the ground. Polls in North Africa show that the EU has had little success in creating an identity for itself as a genuine promoter of norms. While China may be more of an appealing partner for region elites, it remains to be seen if it has influenced perceptions in the region. In Central Asia, China seems to be succeeding at fostering cooperation in line with its norms, but again, little can be said of its success at changing China's image. At the same time, the EU's policies suffer from inconsistency or lack of direction. Normative and soft power theories assume the normative/soft power agency of China and the EU, yet these assumptions are not evident in these two regions.

A closer analysis is necessary to better inform and strengthen these two theories. They are built largely on assumptions about the ability of normative and soft power to change perceptions and norms. Yet neither really considers the agency of the other in normative/soft power relationships, nor the actual impact of normative and soft power on the other. Since power operates in a relationship, a more thorough look at both sides of these relationships is necessary. The 'other' in these relationships also has culture, values, norms, desires, and agency, all of which have to be considered. Doing so can inform discussions of the contexts in which normative/soft powers operate. A more informed discussion can lead to better theory and to a better understanding of the complexity of relations between these rising powers and the other.

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