

BACKYARD FIRE IN THE EU: THE INFLUENCE OF “NORMATIVE POWER CHINA” IN HUNGARY

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Submitted to
Central European University
Department of International Relations

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MA in International
Relations (2 years)

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Budapest, Hungary
2020

Abstract

The EU is widely accepted as a normative power while this paper argues that China is an emerging normative power and is still in its learning process. Although Normative Power China (NPC) is relatively new and weak, it has already set a fire in the EU by challenging the EU via its member states. This paper takes external perceptions to analyse NPC through the recipient country Hungary. The bilateral relationship between China and Hungary and Hungarian other external relationships show that the Hungarian leadership has already accepted Chinese norms and values under NPC, such as “mutual respect”. Moreover, from the case study of Hungary and interviews, it is argued that NPC has a loose structure on its norms and values, and it is more experienced in the engagement of two normative powers than the EU. This paper suggests that considering China as a normative power can enrich the concept of normative power, which should be the research agenda in the future and can be used to better understand current Chinese foreign policy and its engagement with the EU.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, my supervisor Professor Michael Merlingen, who inspired and led my research project. During my two-year study at Central European University, Professor Michael Merlingen was extremely responsive to each of my questions, consultations, and assignments. It has been my honour to work closely with him on this thesis, although the unexpected Covid-19 pandemic slammed the world.

I extend my gratitude to the members of the Department of International Relations and their unwavering support. Professor Alexander Astrov and Coordinator Melinda Nagy helped me a lot in the University. My heartfelt tribute shall be paid to all the others who helped me in the completion of this thesis, especially Mr Robin Bellers and interviewees who accepted my requests. I thank my peers and friends from CEU, like Ms Ava Novidi and Mr Mutlu Duvarci, who have accompanied me and my journey in the past two years and to whom I thank many interesting and partially heated discussions furthering our research interests. More importantly, special thanks go to my mother and grandparents who supported me in finishing my Master degree's study.

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Introduction

The European Union (EU), as an international active actor, has promoted its civilian and military power since its establishment. In addition, European values such as democracy, rule of law, and basic human rights are also widely disseminated through EU practices. In recent research, scholars focus on the EU's normative power suggested by Ian Manners, whose main research targeted fields are EU enlargement, the EU neighbourhoods, and third markets. In other words, analysing the normative power of the EU can help better understand the EU's global governance in the current international circumstances. However, the EU has been significantly challenged in the Union, for example the European debt crisis, the rise of popularism, and Brexit. The situation becomes more complicated when there is another normative power, China, gradually emerging and ambitiously acting.

China's rise has become a challenge, or even a threat, to post-Cold War order and liberal global governance. Since the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was announced in 2013, Chinese overseas actions and expansion are raised to the top of debates. On the one hand, many scholars, like Jean-Pierre Cabestan (2017 & 2019) and Yongjin Zhang (2016a) review the new Chinese foreign policy doctrine and ideologies, particularly under President Xi Jinping; on the other hand, BRI projects are investigated from the perspectives of political economy and regional politics by, for example, Tim Summers (2020) and Dragan Pavličević (2019). Meanwhile, there are more terms and norms created and promoted by the Chinese government in recent years, such as “major-country diplomacy”, “mutual respect” and “development with Chinese characteristics”. However,

there is little research analysing Chinese overseas investments and foreign policies through a normative power perspective. It is necessary to analyse Chinese actions and programmes on a daily basis to understand Chinese norms and values, and how the Chinese government diffuses them.

Ian Manners (2002) argues that “*it is possible to think of the ideational impact of the EU’s international identity/role as representing normative power*” (p. 238), and the normative power is about “*the ability to shape conceptions of ‘normal’ in international relations*” (p. 239). Paying more attention to normative power can help to understand both the EU and China and their relationship in a new discussion. Although normative power is “*ideational rather than material or physical*” (Manners, 2009, p. 2), the practical actions of states are still an essential element in analysing normative power. The concept of normative power suggests that “*not only is the EU constructed on a normative basis, but importantly that this predisposes it to act in a normative way in world politics*” (Manners, 2002, p. 252). Thus, the concept of normative power can bridge not only the ideational dimension of the EU and China together but also their practical foreign policies and exercises respectively.

The EU and China are both significant actors in the international community. The bilateral relationship has rapidly improved through co-operation on, for example, trade, technology, climate change, international peace, and youth exchange (European Commission, 2019a & European Council, 2019). In 2003, the EU and China established the comprehensive strategic partnership. The two entities have further engagements not only within their territories, but also spill-over to the third markets, such as African, Asian, and even Middle East countries. This

research identifies the increasing influence of Normative Power China (NPC) in the EU by analysing the perception of NPC and its engagement with Normative Power Europe (NPE). The main research question is how NPC is perceived by an EU member state - Hungary, and how this perception challenges the EU and its normative power.

This research selects Hungary as the recipient country of NPC. Hungary, which is an EU member state, is a unique case to analyse. The distance between Hungary and the EU is increasingly reflected by many disputes, such as migration policy and the dispute on Article 7 against Hungary. Furthermore, Hungary is a leading country among Central and Eastern European countries pushing the cooperation with China and it signed the memorandum of BRI cooperation with China in 2015. Taking Hungary as the target case can better unfold dynamics behind the influence of NPC in Europe.

This research takes external perceptions as a measurement to assess normative power, namely NPC. Henrik Larsen (2014a) suggests that it is also important to analyse the capability of exercising normative power, and he (2014b) contributes a very important “missing link” – external perceptions into the discussion for analysing normative power. Thus, the research collects Hungarian perception on NPC by reviewing leaders’ speeches, statements, and comments starting from 2012 when President Xi Jinping took office and changed Chinese foreign policy. Besides these statements and documents, the practical actions and programmes will also be reviewed to analyse “normative” acting under those norms and values. Moreover, interviews (see Appendix I) with Hungarian diplomats and high-ranked EU officials in the European

Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) working on the EU-China relationship will complement the analysis.

To address the research question, the thesis will first review the literature on normative power and EU-China relations to explain the gap. The second chapter will focus on conceptions of NPC and its emerging process. This chapter will review the impact of historical development and cultural legacy on current Chinese foreign policies. The third chapter will analyse Hungarian perception on NPC within Hungary-China relationship. The following chapter will look at Hungarian perception on NPC without China's involvement in other multilateral and bilateral relationships. These two chapters present what kind of Chinese norms and values have been promoted to Hungary and to what extent these norms are internalised and applied by the Hungarian leadership. The last chapter outlines the differences between NPC and NPE, in terms of their diffusion mechanisms and constructive structure.

Chapter 1: Normative power

Ian Manners introduces the idea of Normative Power Europe (NPE), including the EU's normative difference, the EU's normative basis, and how EU norms are diffused. He (2002) asks for more attention on the EU's ability to shape conceptions of 'normal' in international relations, and this normative power derives from three resources: historical context, hybrid polity and political-legal constitutionalism. Six patterns of diffusions of NPE are listed by Manners (2002): contagion, informational diffusion, procedural diffusion, transference, overt diffusion, and cultural filter. Normative power is distinguished from civilian power and military power (Manners, 2002). However, Thomas Diez (2005) suggests that normative power and civilian power cannot be separated. In his response to Diez, Manners (2006) lists six distinctions between normative power and civilian power to support his argument. These give a basic theoretical framework of NPE on a preliminary stage.

Regarding NPE, Diez (2005) argues that there are three dimensions of NPE: actorness, relationship, and means; and NPE is a discourse establishing a certain identity for the EU by othering third parties and representing itself as a positive force. More importantly, Manners (2006) appreciates Diez for his contribution on two factors, the role of universal norms and military power dominance, of which the judgement of a powerful normative power is based on. Manners introduces two more factors in judging a claim to normative power: *“whether the exercise of normative power transcends or reinforces the status quo of iniquitous and historically determined power and justice in world politics... whether the exercise of normative power*

transcends the source of that power” (Manners, 2006, p. 170-171). In a later short piece, Manners (2009) clarifies the concept of normative power with five points: being ideational, involving principles, actions, and impact, and having broader consequences in the world. In this research, these five points of NPC will be applied to the Hungary case.

It is also important to clarify this research on China is not driving to the direction of soft power. Most of the recent research pays attention to Chinese economic power and military expansion. Although there are already some scholars focusing on the Chinese influence on the norms and values in the international community, such as international law and multilateral governance (Kent, 2008), the majority of the studies still consider this aspect of the rise of China as soft power. Callahan (2011) suggests more attention on the normative aspect of China’s soft power, which is different from Manners’ conception of normative power. Callahan takes Nye’s understanding of soft power as reference: soft power is the ability of a state to set the agenda of the international politics and use its values to define not only problems but also solutions (Nye, 2004). Nye (2004) suggests that “*soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others*”. However, normative power is another discussion independent from soft and hard powers or civilian and military powers (Whitman, 2011).

According to Diez and Manners (2007), normative power is a theoretical concept asking an understanding of both normative practices and social diffusion, rather than soft power as an empirical concept. Moreover, normative power, which is not the opposite of military power, is not a foreign policy tool for national interests, which soft power is. It is important to carefully clarify the difference between normative power and soft power. Thus, through the normative

power perspective, the recent Chinese external actions and its overseas projects can be better understood from a new perspective. This perspective can also enrich the analysis of Chinese foreign relationships, as the normative power conceptualizes international society as composed of different actors and rejects the tendency to limit the activities of the international community to the relations between states (Whitman, 2011).

In terms of assessing normative power, external perception, as a measurement, will be helpful. Normative power can be understood as a status that is attained by an actor when other actors recognise that actor's status during the process of social interaction (Han, 2017). However, at the beginning, Manners (2002) suggests that there are two broad observations for assessing the exercise of normative power. First, the EU is trying to reorder the language of international society via its engagement. Second, the EU seeks to raise issues on bilateral and multilateral basis as a way of shaping the dialogue between other states. However, these two observations remain EU-centric.

Larsen (2014b) introduces a missing link, external perceptions, to assess NPE. He argues that, *“given the internal context of meaning, the label ‘regional normative power’ may be more appropriate for the EU”* (p. 908). Even in the Chinese context, Yan (2018) suggests that it is the merging of these values, Chinese traditional values and liberalism, that should prove universally acceptable to people of different countries. Whitman (2013) also suggests that recognition is indicated by the reactions of target states and the concept *“is not merely about being and becoming a normative power, but also about being recognised as one by others”* (p. 186). Thus,

the external perceptions from recipient countries help to define whether a normative power is strong or weak, global or regional.

More importantly, considering that NPE is not the only perception of the EU, the external perceptions can help to analyse the combination of NPE and other sources of power (Larsen, 2014b). This argument supports the combined existing of different sources of power, like normative power, economic power, and soft power. In this paper, analysing the influence of NPC does not intend to show China as merely a normative power only and neglect other sources of power.

However, there are many critiques on the concept of normative power. Whitman (2013) summarises that central to the normative power argument is the rejection of state-centred and totalistic view of traditional approaches. But the structural realists argue that “*the EU was used by its most influential member states as an instrument for collectively exercising hegemonic power, shaping its ‘near abroad’ in ways amenable to the long-term strategic and economic interests of its member states*” (Hyde-Price, 2006, p. 226-227). Whitman (2013) considers the EU has a separate actorness to its member states and is “*an actor on its own with a continuous support for universal values*” (p. 177). The debate focuses on the relationship between the EU and its member states, and more importantly, the fundamental question: what is the EU?

Normative power is about the intention for all good. However, Eriksen (2006) argues that a policy with good intentions may neglect others’ values or interests or fail to even consider the others. Seeing the problem, Sjørusen (2006) asks for a clear definition and critical standards in

analysing the concept of normative power. Again, to these questions, “*principles, actions and impact are equally important for NPE*”, and defining the EU within normative theorising fulfils various scholarly appetites, reasserted by Whitman (2013, p. 178 & 179).

In terms of Chinese foreign policy, its external actions have been widely discussed, especially those principles, like “non-interference” and “responsible state”. These debates are related to Chinese new norms, identity, global position, and view of global order. The discussion is heated not only in western scholarship but also in Chinese domestic academia. For example, Zheng (2016) analyses the debates on the non-interference principle and suggests that Beijing has realised the limitations of the non-interference principle which remains crucial to China’s core interests of state security and territorial integrity. There is a common conclusion among many scholars that China is taking a mixed foreign policy. Zeng (2019) suggests that China is still in the process of finding its own role and sends out mixed signals over its expectations for global economic order and its own position within the system. Also, China is keeping and will keep its multiple identities for some time (Zheng, 2016 & Zeng, 2019).

Xuetong Yan (2011), a Chinese scholar, has already reviewed international leadership and norm evolution, especially the role of China and Chinese values in the world, which leads the discussion of Chinese norms to the international level. Regarding international norms and normative change, the focus rests on the challenge to the international liberal order. Yan (2018) contends that the values of liberalism are challenged by the rise of competing ideologies from all around the world, including traditional values in China. Zhang (2016a) suggests that the rise of China will continuously influence the power dynamics not just in power-political terms but also

in terms of normative change in the international system. Pu (2012) suggests that China has become a norm-shaper of humanitarian intervention. Specifically, China has developed three strategic approaches for normative change in global society, namely, defending liberal pluralism in the legalised hegemony, contesting liberal cosmopolitan anti-pluralism in the changing normative order, and endorsing state-centric solidarism with regard to the construction of an international liberal order (Zhang, 2016b). In particular cases, Han (2017) asserts that China has begun to socialise ASEAN to accept China's status as a normative power, but limited success has been achieved.

Emilian Kavalski and Young Chul Cho (2018) contribute to the study of normative power by undertaking a parallel assessment of NPE and NPC and they suggest that the EU's ability is challenged by China as a normative power. *"The parallel assessment of normative power insists that for the EU, its normative power is pivoted on the legal framework of the *acquis Communautaire*, while for China – it is the practices of *guanxi* [relations]"* (Kavalski & Cho, 2018, p. 50). However, they criticise that Manners' purest form of normative power is embedded in the cognitive framework of EU-centric explanation and understanding. This shows that the analysis on NPC or generalising normative power out of Europe is valid and fruitful, as *"the present study asserts that non-Western normative orders are just as legitimate as Western ones"* (Kavalski & Cho, 2018, p. 52).

Moreover, when undertaking parallel assessment between NPE and NPC, Kavalski and Cho also highlight the recognition. *"Brussels and Beijing are learning that for their normative power to be considered legitimate, they themselves are expected to behave in certain ways to earn such*

recognition” (2018, p. 63). However, they analyse these two normative powers on a higher overall abstract level, rather than specific norms and values. While, Kavalski (2012) has his book focusing on security governance in Central Asia to analyse normative powers, this research has one target country, a member state of the EU – Hungary, which might provide different findings on the relationship and engagement between NPE and NPC. More importantly, NPC learns from the EU, which is not merely a parallel structure between NPE and NPC.

The current literature on normative power provides a fruitful perspective to analyse the identity of the EU and actions of the Union. It is notable that normative power is different from soft power. However, applying normative power does not mean to totally ignore material elements or physical interaction. At the beginning, although the concept of NPE is strongly Eurocentric, it has been developed as well. The rise of China and the structural change of the international community request further evolution of normative power theorising. Meanwhile, the concept of normative power can provide a valid and alternative understanding of rise of China and the EU-China relationship.

Chapter 2: The emergence of Normative Power China

This chapter illustrates the specific norms and values invoked in Chinese foreign policy. The purpose is to unfold the evolution of Chinese foreign policy and to analyse the latest Normative Power China (NPC). The People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded on 1st October 1949 and it is not difficult to divide its history into five periods, based on the core leaderships. The first period, from 1949 to 1976, was under Mao-Zhou's leadership which ended when Chairman Mao died in 1976. Prime Minister Zhou was the head of the Chinese government from 1949 to 1976 and he was also the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1949 to 1958. The second period was under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. Deng is regarded as the "Chief architect" of opening-up reform which fundamentally led China towards rapid development. He visited many foreign countries, which generated huge impact in western countries. The third period was the period of Jiang Zemin, who was the supreme leader of China from 1989 to 2002. In Jiang's term, Chinese foreign policy was focusing on China-US relations and China-Russia relations. Jiang's successor, Hu Jintao, was the General Secretary of the CCP from 2002 to 2012. Under Hu's leadership, China had multilateral relationships with different countries, especially the neighbouring countries and Beijing held the 2008 Olympic Games. In the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, the power was handed over to the current leader: President Xi Jinping. Since 2012, Xi has created many new norms and terms in Chinese foreign policy.

These five periods, each of them has specific principles and norms advocated by the leadership. These principles and norms will be ordered and be analysed in their empirical diffusion terms.

More importantly, this evolution presents the generation process of NPC. It is argued that NPC is generated under Xi's leadership. Although the previous leaders could not form NPC, they left essential legacies and created opportunities for the emergence of NPC.

Mao-Zhou period (1949-1976): Sovereignty independence and ideological dependence

In the first thirty years of the new established China, Chairman Mao and PM Zhou led the country in many international events and incidents, such as the Korean war, the Sino-Soviet split, and the PRC replacing ROC in the UN. In this period, because of the new establishment of the state and the Cold War ideological division, Chinese foreign policies were strongly protecting on its sovereignty independence, solidarity with the socialist camp, legitimacy of CCP, and national security.

Before the establishment of PRC, Mao and Zhou had already suggested their position on the foreign policy of new China. The pre-requirement of Chinese foreign policy was based on restriction against the Kuomintang (KMT, Chinese nationalist party) and establishment a new independent country. The foreign policy of PRC can be traced back to the beginning of 1949. On 19th January 1949, Zhou issued *Instruction on diplomatic tasks of the central committee*. This instruction gave a very strong position that the CCP's regime did not recognise foreign representatives as diplomats at that time because foreign representatives represented imperialist governments and helping the (KMT) rebel force against Chinese people's liberation (Zhou, 1949). This instruction delivered CCP's specific policies to foreign representatives, trade, education,

media, and other aspects, although it was a temporary instruction valid before the state establishment.

Niu (2013, p. 42) points out that Mao suggested the first foundational principle and pre-requirement of Chinese foreign policy on 30th April 1949 in the *Statement from the speaker of the Chinese PLA headquarter on the issue of British warship's atrocity*. The statement declared that the new Chinese government were willing to establish diplomatic relationships with foreign countries and these relationships must base on equality, mutual-benefit, mutual-respect on integrity of sovereignty and territory, and the foreign countries could not help the KMT rebel force (Mao, 1949). Another foundational document, *Common program of the Chinese people's political consultative conference*, before the state establishment indicated clearly the same pre-requirement of binding diplomatic relationships.

At the beginning of the establishment of PRC, its foreign policy was extremely based on ideology and tied with the socialist camp. After 1949, Chinese foreign policy developed according to the changing situation. There were six Chinese diplomatic principles raised by Mao and clearly defined by Zhou in 1952: “establishing another stove”, “leaning to one side”, “cleaning the house before inviting guests”, “courtesy demanding reciprocity”, “mutual exchange”, “unification of global people” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs PRC, nd., & Zhou, 1952). The former Minister of Foreign Affairs Qian Qichen suggested that the first three principles gave the foundation of the independent peaceful diplomacy of new China (Qian, 1999). Furthermore, Zhou, as the first Minister of the Foreign Affairs of PRC, gave a bureaucratic order of different departments in the newly established Ministry. There were eight departments in total and the priority went to Soviet

Union & Eastern Europe Department, as the first department, and the second was Asia Department, the third was Western Europe Northern Africa Department (Qiao, nd.). The institutional setting shows the priority of ideology as well.

During the negotiation on the border issue between China and India in 1953, Zhou suggested the five principles of peaceful coexistence, namely “mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity”, “mutual non-aggression”, “non-interference in each other’s internal affairs”, “equality and mutual benefit”, and “peaceful coexistence”. These five principles were jointly stated by China and India, China and Myanmar in 1954. In 1955, Asia-African Conference (Bandung Conference) issued a ten-point declaration on promotion of world peace and cooperation, which included the five principles promoted by China, India, and Myanmar.

The five principles have a strong impact in the history of Chinese foreign policy. In 1957, Mao mentioned the five principles to his audiences in Moscow (Shen, 2007). Deng Xiaoping, as Executive Vice-Premier of China, suggested that: “*The political and economic relationships among states should base on [...] five principles. We against any country violating these principles, establishing hegemony and spheres of influence in any region*” (Deng, 1974). The UN describes that his speech delivered a new and more moderate Chinese foreign policy and proposed to establish a new international economic order (UN, nd.). The five principles are remarkable in Chinese foreign policy because it is beyond China-centrism and the basic concern of ideology. Initiated by China, it presents a transnational rule in the region, which shows the focus on the relationships among countries rather than Chinese foreign policy itself. Furthermore, it has a long-time legacy as the first and the current Chinese supreme leaders advocated them in

their speeches. However, the acceptance of the principles is problematic. The principles do not seem “*to be accepted by most of countries in the world*”, suggested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC (2000).

The foreign policy at that time was strongly limited in the binarity of socialism against capitalism, or imperialism. Although there was the initiation of five principles, which showed the ambition of China to present its own version of international order, the five principles were relatively weak, only accepted by neighbouring countries, and its influence were restricted. In this period, there was no room for China to promote a “normal” international order and China was not able to do so either.

Deng Xiaoping period (1976-1992): Open to the world

Deng turned away from the ideological confrontational strategy in the Mao-Zhou era and he opened China to the world. It was the start of a confident and ambitious China. In Deng’s period, the domestic economic and social structure was dramatically reformed and Chinese foreign policy changed as well.

The change started with China’s foreign relationships and Deng’s foreign visits. Shen (2012) suggests it was between 1978 and 1989 that China could normalise its foreign policies with most powers in the world. In 1975, Deng re-visited France to “observe” the advanced industry, transportation, management and science in the country. From 1977 to 1980, many Chinese senior

officials were sent out to developed countries to gain experiences and their study tours had a big impact on Chinese thinking (Vogel. 2011). In 1978, Deng first visited Burma and Nepal in January and February, North Korea in September and Japan in October. In November, Deng travelled to Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. It shows that the neighbouring countries were the priority of Deng's foreign policy at the beginning.

Meanwhile, the relationships with western powers were emphasised as well. Deng had foreign visits to European countries and the US. Before his remarkable state-visit to the US in 1979, China and the US established diplomatic relationship in the end of 1978. In 1985, Deng expressed his expectation on the increase of the European share in Chinese international trade and Chinese products entering European markets (Deng, 1985).

Deng led his CCP presenting the willingness of making good relationships with other countries with a modest attitude. In Deng's speech in the UN 1974, he focused on the international economic order and strongly criticised the US and Soviet Union. However, in the end of his speech, he made a suggestion: *"if China becomes socialist imperialism in the future, people in other countries and people in China should crush it down together"* (Deng, 1974). These show that Deng had relocated the role of China in the world stage and the relationships between China and other countries were equal for a world order without hegemony.

In much of Deng's literature (Deng, 1984a, 1984b, & 1988), he summarised two main problems of the international order: global peace and South-North conflicts. According to Deng, to solve the first problem, China and other countries should fight against hegemonism, namely the US and

Soviet Union. The second problem is about development, and the solution is cooperation, in which the key is South-South cooperation. This was also reflected in another Deng's argument: China is in the camp of "third countries", thus China must cooperate with other developing countries and learn from developed countries to maintain a peaceful world, meanwhile, against the two superpowers/hegemonies (Deng, 1982). Moreover, Deng specifically addressed the term of "non-interference" in 1990:

"China can never accept other's intervention in domestic issues. [...] The most paramount principle of new order of international relations should be non-interference in domestic issues of other states, non-interference in social institution of other states. [...] The human rights and civil rights cannot control this problem [chaos in China]. The only solution is that countries with different social institutions should base on five principles of peaceful coexistence to peacefully coexist and to mutually cooperate, rather than interfere others domestic issues or trigger domestic chaos in other countries" (Deng, 1990).

There is an organic composition and logic of Deng's foreign policy and international order. China should take its own control of both foreign policy and development against the ideological struggles and hegemonies. Global peace is the pre-condition to the development issues of "third countries" and cooperation between North and South. Thus, China should take its role, fully controlling its own foreign policy, to maintain global peace for both domestic and international development.

What kind of "role" did Deng define for China? One of the most frequently used phrases to abstract Deng's foreign policy and the role of China under Deng's leadership is "taoguang yanghui" [韬光養晦], which means concealing its capacities and biding its time (Li, 1998; cited in Shen, 2012) or keeping a low profile (Yan, 2014). "Taoguang yanghui" was first clarified in 1992, when Deng suggested this phrase to officials on development problems (Luo, 2010; Wang,

2014; Xiao, 2010). Deng said: “*we keep a low profile to work some more years, then [China] can become a larger political force, the weight of Chinese voice in international affairs will be different*” (Leng & Wang, 2004, p. 1346; Chen & Wang, 2011). In other words, Deng’s foreign policy placed China in a broader international environment. More importantly, Deng did not suggest China should take an aggressive role, extending its sphere of influence or values to other countries.

In Deng’s era, Chinese foreign policy departed from the ideological struggle between socialist and capitalist camps. Deng focused more on the development issue and unifying other developing countries. Economic growth and development were the key of Deng’s era and starting from this, Deng was willing to make good relationships with multi-actors, learning from developed countries and standing with developing countries. Keeping a low profile was the core of Deng’s foreign policy. However, it is remarkable that the purpose of keeping a low profile is to grow a larger power in the future. In this sense, Deng’s era was cultivating both the “body” and the “mind” of a strong major country - China in the future with a much more powerful voice.

Jiang Zemin period (1992-2002): Learn from the West

Under the leadership of Jiang Zemin, China faced many challenges and opportunities from outside, such as the Chinese embassy in Belgrade bombing in 1999, entering the WTO in 2001, and establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in 2001. Berenberg (2002) suggests that Jiang’s leadership was limited within the framework of Deng Xiaoping’s liberal economic

and conservative political plan, and Jiang's lack of creativity contributes to China keeping itself on the path to economic development and preventing political liberalisation.

In the second half of his leadership, Jiang pushed multidimensional relationships with other countries, especially with major powers in the world, namely the US, European countries and Japan. For example, he emphasised the significance of the China-Europe relationship as China and European countries were all important actors (Jiang, 2002). Moreover, Jiang started to drag China out of the "third countries" into a new role: a major power in the world. In the speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations 1994, Jiang (2000a) said that China was a paramount component and strong force maintaining peace and stability of the world. In New York 2000, Jiang addressed his American audience: *"Chinese people and American people are both great people. China and America are both great countries. Two governments of China and US [...] work together to establish the constructively strategic partnership facing the 21st century for China and the US"* (Jiang, 2000b).

The relationship between China and the US was outstanding in Jiang's period. After 9/11, Jiang talked to George H. W. Bush in 2002 and Jiang described that China was the largest developing country and the US was the largest developed country (Guo, 2002a). In the press meeting with George W. Bush, Jiang expressed his satisfaction on the cooperation between China and the US against terrorism and Bush admitted that the US and China were global allies on anti-terrorism (Guo, 2002b). There seemed to be opportunities for cooperation as the US asked China for help against the terrorists (Khan, 2018, p. 195), which was a successful win-win major-state relationship for China.

In Jiang's period, Chinese foreign policy was highly driven by the relationships between China and other major countries. More importantly, Jiang tried to lift the Chinese position to the same level as other major countries, especially other developed countries. Jiang did not have much his own creativity in Chinese foreign policy and his focus was still development, sovereignty (Taiwan issue), peace, and security. In other words, at that time, China did not significantly contribute constructive norms to the international community but learned the western liberal global governance and participating in this game under the western rules.

Hu Jintao's 10 years (2002-2012): All-dimensional diplomacy & soft power

In Hu Jintao's 10-year administration, China elevated itself to a new level in the world, for example by the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing and 2010 Shanghai Expo. "All-dimensional diplomacy" (quanfangwei waijiao) was the key and guiding term in Hu's period. In his report at the 17th national congress of the CCP, he claimed that all-dimensional diplomacy achieved great progress (Hu, 2007). The specific policies of all dimensional diplomacy were illustrated in the working outline of the State Council 2007. There were nine points (State Council, 2007):

- 1) promoting relationships with main great powers (the US, Russia, Japan, Germany, France, and the EU),
- 2) solidifying good relationships with neighbouring countries,
- 3) keeping cooperation with developing countries,
- 4) willingly participating multilateral diplomacy,

- 5) contributing on hot and global issues,
- 6) absolutely protecting national sovereignty and safety,
- 7) protecting the legal rights of Chinese citizens overseas,
- 8) promoting both Chinese domestic and foreign policies to the world, and
- 9) preparing for the Olympic games.

In these points, Hu and his team showed the priority of Chinese foreign policy which was: major powers first, neighbouring countries second, and other developing countries third, which was the opposite of Mao-Zhou's strategy. More ambitious than his predecessor, in points 4 and 5, Hu pushed China into global governance and told the world that China was ready to take responsibilities as a major power as well. Points 7 and 9 demonstrated not only Chinese influence (labour force, tourists, and economic investments) going out but also attracting foreign interests into the country.

In terms of soft power, another remarkable action of Chinese external behaviour during the time was promoting the Confucius Institute (CI) all around the world. The first CI was established in South Korea in 2004, and to 2020, there were already 545 CIs established globally, according to Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban, 2020). It is not hard to relate CI and the emerging Chinese soft power (Luqiu & McCarthy, 2019; McCord, 2019), which has been widely discussed in both academia and public medias. Gil (2009) suggests that investment in teaching the language is part of the national soft power strategy. CI projects have the promotion of Chinese-language learning as their key element and they have shown the increasingly active manner of China to

craft a favourable external environment (Gil, 2015). Actually, CI's promotion in the content of the "Chinese soft power" was announced in Hu's speech in 2007. Although in the speech, he did not directly link soft power and foreign policies, he still emphasised that

"the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will definitely be accompanied by the thriving of Chinese culture [...] We must enhance culture as part of the soft power of our country [...] We will further publicize the fine traditions of Chinese culture and strengthen international cultural exchanges to enhance the influence of Chinese culture worldwide" (Hu, 2007).

However, regarding soft power in Hu's administration, Nye (2013) does not agree that CIs can help China to achieve its goal because soft power is launched by individuals, private sectors, and civil society, therefore China put its government in the wrong position as the main instrument of soft power.

In Hu's ten years, Chinese foreign policy was in transition from keeping a low profile to global activism, which became a necessity rather than a luxury for China (Zhao, 2010). In other words, Hu showed China's ambition to influence or even change the world, however, his administration and foreign policies did not totally abandon Deng's principle: taoguang yanghui. Different from Jiang and Deng, who had the image of an external-stretched China, Hu took an experimental step, using Chinese culture and soft power to test the reflection from international audiences. Of course, it could not be possible without Deng and Jiang's efforts on economic growth for decades. Culture, as a base of normative power (Manners, 2002), at the first time was selected as a tool for China's expansion in Hu's administration. This also has an impact on his successor taking a more aggressive foreign strategy.

Xi Jinping (2012-): Emergence of Normative Power China

Besides those practical actions and exercises, different from his processors, Xi announced a specific system of theory for Chinese diplomacy, namely major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era (MCDCCNE). This theory system is underpinned by Chinese diplomatic practices since 1949 and particularly by innovations in diplomatic theory and practice after the 18th CCP National Congress (Zeng, 2018). MCDCCNE was first written into the central government's report to the 2016 National People's Congress, the highest institution of state power and national legislation branch, which means that MCDCCNE has firmly become the guiding thoughts and theory of China's foreign policy under Xi's leadership. What does MCDCCNE exactly mean? In Xi's report to the 19th CCP National Congress, he explained the concept:

“We have made all-round efforts in the pursuit of major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, thus advancing China's diplomatic agenda in a comprehensive, multilevel, multifaceted way and creating a favourable external environment for China's development. We have jointly pursued the Belt and Road Initiative, initiated the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, set up the Silk Road Fund, and hosted the First Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, [...] China champions the development of a community with a shared future for mankind and has encouraged the evolution of the global governance system. With this we have seen a further rise in China's international influence, ability to inspire, and power to shape; and China has made great new contributions to global peace and development [...] It makes clear that major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics aims to foster a new type of international relations and build a community with a shared future for mankind” (Xi, 2017).

From Xi's words, China is taking and must take a far more ambitious role in global governance. The main ideals of MCDCCNE are presented in Table 1, according to other Chinese high-ranked officials' illustration of this theory of Chinese foreign policy (Wang, 2017; Yang, 2019; & Yu, 2017).

Structure of Major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics (Table 1.)

	China	World
Image	Construction of new international relations	Construction of a community of shared future for mankind
Resources	History, culture, diplomatic policies, practices	
Values	Mutual respect (presumption) Fairness & justice (principle) Cooperation & win-win (goal)	lasting peace, universal security, common prosperity, openness and inclusiveness, clean and beautiful
Strategies & practices	Partner relations (routes) Major-country diplomacy: 1) the US, 2) Russia, 3) Europe, 4) Central Asia, 5) Southeast Asia, 6) Africa, 7) Latin America & South Pacific, 8) Multilateralism (UN, G20, APEC, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, BRICS)	Belt & Road Initiative (practice)

China, with more confidence and power than before, proposes to the world a new “future”, which is different from the US’s or the EU’s. “Democracy”, “rule of law”, and “human rights” do not appear in a Chinese version of world future, which gives a signal that China has the ambition to challenge the international liberal order after the WWII. In Xi’s report to the 19th CCP National Congress, he clearly states that “*we have seen a further rise in China’s international influence, ability to inspire, and power to shape; and China has made great new contributions to global peace and development*” (Xi, 2017). The strong phrases: “ability to inspire, and power to shape”, reflect the emerging of NPC and the determination of China’s norm diffusion.

In Xi's era, China has grown into a normative power, at least an emerging one. Generally speaking, NPC is diffusing norms and values of what "normal" is in the current world order, which is different from the West, such as Normative Power Europe (NPE). However, this NPC is still in a learning process. There are six features of emerging NPC in Xi's period. First, a paramount systemised package of theory on Chinese foreign policy is created to support the development of NPC. With its own understanding of its role in the world and the future international order, this package of theory includes the guidance to both ideational and practical levels.

From Table 1, Xi's foreign policy package actually has two faces, one is a China-centred focus and the other is a world focus. Both of them are the Chinese proposal to the world of "*what kind of world will be constructed, what kind of diplomacy China will need, how to conduct international interaction, and how to discover the future of mankind's development*" (Wang, 2017). The partner relationships are the routes to construct a new international order and China gives its priorities among international actors. This priority order shows that China currently has a concrete international image on its own role and its global relationships, and it has a clear strategy of exporting its influence facing various partners (competitors or enemies).

Second, Chinese traditional culture and political philosophy are re-born in Xi's era to support NPC. The emerging of NPC is a process and not only traditional culture but also the evolution of Chinese foreign policy facilitate the process. Some specific norms in NPC, such as "mutual respect" and "non-interference", can be traced back to Mao-Zhou and Deng periods. In other words, there is historical legacy constructing NPC.

The current Chinese leadership try to extend the culture expansion under Hu's administration. Xi's foreign policies emphasises the Chinese traditional culture and philosophy as the base and resource of the new international order, as supported by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who said that the new type of international relations was the result of both Chinese traditional culture and the practice of Chinese diplomacy (Wang, 2015). Minister Wang (2015) also highlighted the difference of traditional values and political philosophy between China and western countries, which gives the room of a different normative power to emerge. These historical elements are highly shared in current Asian societies. Moreover, the BRI programmes are repacked into the resume of "silk road" in the history. In other words, there was a historical connection between China and other countries and this connection is unfolded and re-constructed into present circumstances.

Third, Institutional supports, including diplomatic relationships, agencies and practical projects, are improved for NPC. A normative power can not only have norms or values on paper but also practice and actions. The Chinese norms are institutionalised by practice and actions and these norms need institutional support for diffusion. Meanwhile, norms and values are guiding practice and actions, which is acting "normatively".

To some extent, these international organisations and China's participation provide legal base for NPC. China has joined various international organisations and plays an essential role in them, like the UN, the WTO, the World Bank. On one hand, China has a strong influence in these international organisations, on the other hand, China is also limited by regulations and rules of

these international organisations. What NPC is promoting now has not abandoned the UN Charter, for example, “mutual respect” and “non-interference” are frequently used by China according to the UN Charter.

Moreover, there are more regional organisations providing legal support to NPC. The Shanghai cooperation, the BRICS, the China-ASIAN cooperation, the China-CEE countries cooperation, these are regional organisations and institutions providing support to NPC. More importantly, these regional organisations gives more flexibility to China because the conventional western influences are relatively less. China has more room to build the legal base and institutional supports it needs.

Fourth, China is ready, and more importantly, is willing to re-shape the world, in terms of international “normal” norms and values. Diez (2013) argues that Manners’ concept of normative power does not act in its own interests but binds itself to international norms, whether they are in national interests or not. One of the major differences between Xi’s foreign policies and his predecessors is that China gives a new international order with its own significant role, like the US and the EU.

The willingness can be found in China’s improvement in its institutional support to NPC. For example, the BRI gives a channel for China to exercise its global view with its alternative values, norms, and goals. BRI is regarded as a practice to deliver such new Chinese world-future, which can be a counter strategic instrument to challenge the old institutions, like IMF and World Bank,

under the US hegemony. Other international organisations and institutions established or led by China, mentioned in Xi's own report, also provide institutional support.

Fifth, NPC is not an absolute Chinese product but a combination. The learning process of NPC shows that NPC is a combination of asymmetric elements from both China itself and the West. Currently, China is taking the institutionalisation mechanism following the West. Since 1978, China has not been isolated anymore but been participating in global governance. The elite-class and decision-making process in China is internationalised by its embracement into the world and globalisation. In these short 40 years, China learned multilateralism, liberalism, international cooperation, and other elements under the western dominant international order. It is a short history, but it is an important history base of China being a part of the world.

There is a stunning but awkward phrase in the goals of “a community of shared future for mankind”: clean and beautiful. Wang (2017) illustrates that a clean and beautiful future world emphasises environment and climate change. This emphasis can be an effort from the western world, especially the EU via its normative power, since China acknowledged European leading role and power of example in global environmental issues (Ferenczy, 2019). In other words, Chinese exporting values and norms do not entirely derive from China but are a result of socialisation from the West and decades of learning process. NPE is providing a paradigm for NPC to learn and without such paradigm, the emerging of NPC is highly unlikely.

Finally, following the fifth feature, NPC is an emerging normative power and it is still in a learning process. The institutions established by China, such as the Asian Infrastructure

Investment Bank, and Chinese participating and supporting to multilateralism institutions, like the UN and G20, are taking the western mechanism to institutionalise Chinese norms. To some extent, China is still following the western dominant system and China takes benefit from it as a learning process. One of the reasons might be that the Chinese own institutional support is relatively weak and highly depends on Western traditional global game rules. Moreover, NPC is making itself stronger by learning from its practice and bilateral relationships, which will be demonstrated in the Hungary case.

Specific norms and values, such as “mutual respect” and “development with own characteristics”, and the practice under NPC will be illustrated by the Hungary case. This research will focus on the diffusion and perception of NPC, especially facing another well-developed normative power: the EU. The selected case study will uncover this link and the dynamics between two normative powers showing that Normative Power China is challenging Normative Power Europe through a recipient country.

Chapter 3: Normative Power China in Hungary-China relationship

“The Chinese political system is a matter for the Chinese people, just as the Hungarian political system is a matter for the Hungarian people. No one has the right to interfere with this by adopting the role of a kind of self-appointed judge. With this in mind, we see this forum as a valuable opportunity, because it gives us Central Europeans the opportunity to understand the thinking of Chinese politicians in greater depth and breadth. This is essential for enabling relations to strengthen” (Orbán, 2016a).

It is safe to say that China has reached every corner around the world with its global strategy. Those new Chinese norms, values, terms, and identities are applied to its external actions, bilateral and multilateral relationships. Hungary is an outstanding country in the EU, as its Prime Minister publicly rails against some of the EU policies and values, such as migration policy and multiculturalism. Moreover, Hungary is a leading country in the region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The continuously warming bilateral relationship between China and Hungary is an excellent case to unfold the dynamics of Normative Power China (NPC) in the EU and Europe.

Taking the external perception as the measurement of NPC, it is important to see how Hungarian leaders perceive the relationships between these two countries and whether Hungarian leaders agree with Chinese new global norms and values. *Daily News Hungary* and *About Hungary*, where Hungarian leaders' speeches and comments are translated and reported, providing comprehensive information and news related to Hungary and Hungarians in English, is reviewed from 2014 to 2020. All online articles and reports with the key word “China” were selected. Some specific official speeches and statements from the Hungarian government published by the government are analysed as well.

There are five main findings from speeches and comments selected, in terms of NPC in Hungary. First, the Chinese norm, “mutual respect”, is the key norm that is applied by Hungarian leaders to Hungary-China relationships. Second, there are two minor norms of NPC, “development path with characteristics” and “double standards”, are internalised by the Hungarian leadership as well. Third, Hungary is convinced that there is a new world order led by the East, namely China, and the old world order, namely dominated by western Europe, is declining. Fourth, NPC is still learning from Hungary-China relationship and both China and Hungary declare that their tightening relationship is good for development and cooperation within the CEE region and the EU. Finally, compared to Normative Power Europe (NPE), NPC is relatively weak, and China’s identity as a strong economic power remains an essential part of Hungarian perception.

First, “mutual respect” is promoted by the Chinese government and is one of the core norms of the Chinese image of new global order. This norm, “mutual respect” has a long history in Chinese foreign policy, starting from the five principles of peaceful coexistence in Mao-Zhou’s regime to the current sovereignty disputes in the South China sea, which is strongly related to national security and regional stability. In terms of “mutual respect”, China promoted this norm at the beginning for its regime legitimacy and the survival of the new nation. Five principles of peaceful coexistence helped the new China establish friendly neighbourhood relationships with India and other Southeast Asian countries. Later on, this core norm helped China to “open-up” and reform for its economic development.

In the 21st century, “mutual respect” retains its significance, following the increasing Chinese national interests in all dimensions, like sovereignty, security, economy, and international position. In other words, Chinese “mutual respect” is a norm asking all states to mutually respect other countries’ national interests. However, the problem emerges when respect meets interests, especially frequent power imbalance between participants. It is safe to say that when China faces the US and African countries, the exact meaning of “mutual respect”, respect of what, and practice under this norm are different. In Hungary’s case, both countries, China and Hungary benefit from “mutual respect” in their bilateral relationship and cooperation, but also on opposing the third party’s interference, namely the EU.

This norm is widely applied by Hungarian leadership. This norm can be easily found in speeches and comments of Hungarian leaders from 2015 to 2019. In 2015, Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, attended the 4th CEE-China Cooperation in Suzhou, China. Orbán suggested that stressing the ties between China and CEE countries were based on “*respect and mutual interests*” (Daily News, 2015a). The CEE-China Cooperation provides an essential platform to strengthen the relationship between Hungary and China and it also facilitates the construction of NPC in Hungary. In 2018, Orbán gave a speech to the summit of central bank governors from China and CEE countries in Budapest. He said: “*it should be accepted that we are different and manage our countries differently*”, which was “*not to pass judgement but promote mutual interests*” (Daily News, 2018). In 2019, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó claimed that “mutual respect” is the foundation of the relationship and cooperation between Hungary and China (Daily News, 2019a).

“Mutual respect” has covered more than economic development issue. In the CEE-China Cooperation 2017, Orbán said to his counterpart, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang, in a press brief: *“the regional cooperation between China and Central and Eastern Europe is based on mutual respect and serves peace and stability”* (Daily News, 2017a). From Orbán’s comment, the Chinese norm of “mutual respect” has exceeded conventional political ideologies, values, and as a base of economic cooperation. “Mutual respect” can also support peace and stability.

It is interesting to see that the diffusion of Chinese norms are not limited within administrative branches but expand to legislative institutions as well. 2019 was the 70th anniversary of the diplomatic relationship establishment between these two countries. Holding a conference marking 70 years of Sino-Hungarian diplomatic relationship with the Speaker of the Chinese National People’s Congress, Hungary’s House Speaker László Kövér also suggested that the inter-state relation between Hungary and China remained stable, which was *“determined by mutual respect and a commitment to developing cooperation”* (Daily News, 2019b).

Second, there are another two minor norms the Hungarian government might learn from China under the umbrella of “mutual respect”: “development path with characteristics” and “double standards”. These two terms are widely used by China when the western countries, especially the US and western European countries, criticise Chinese problems, including human rights, economic marketisation, and even the transparency of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). At the daily press brief of Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10th December 2019, spokesperson Hua Chunying commented on the “other countries” concern and critiques on Chinese human rights. She said:

“It is an opportunity for all parties to further promote and protect human rights, abide by the purposes and principles of the UN charter, respect the paths of human rights development chosen by all countries on their own, take an objective, just and non-selective stance, and avoid politicising human rights issues and applying double standards. China stands ready to step up exchange and cooperation with all parties in the field of human rights on the basis of equality and mutual respect, advance development through cooperation while promoting human rights through development, and jointly build a community with a shared future for mankind” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, 2019).

“Mutual respect” is necessary because every country has its right to choose different paths with their own characteristics. This right to choose its own path can cover various issues, namely economic development, human rights, and national security. When the western countries do not respect China’s own development path choice, “double standards” are the counterargument against western countries. In other words, “mutual respect” requests avoiding “double standards”. Once there is “mutual respect”, there is no problem of “standards”, since every “standard” is respected.

During his visit to Hungary in 2017, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang and the Chinese government recognised that Hungary, under the leadership of Orbán, is gradually walking on a development path with Hungarian characteristics (Liu, 2017). This is clearly an informative diffusion of a normative power. The informative diffusion is the result of the range of strategic communications, like declaratory communications and new policy initiatives (Manners, 2002). During the communication, the Chinese leader summarised the Hungarian situation with a Chinese normative term and sold it to the Hungarian leadership. It is a way of diffusion by generalising and reapplying norms through strategic communications.

Orbán illustrates his idea of the unique development path with Hungarian characteristics on many occasions. For example, he suggests that Central European countries have the right to defend national economic sectors and markets (Orbán, 2018). In his speech on the night of the European Parliament election 2019, he made it clear that “*we joined the European Union in order that Hungary could become a country where we decide on our own destiny*” (Orbán, 2019). Moreover, choosing its own way of development is expanded beyond economic growth to social and cultural scales. Orbán visited China in 2017 and said that everyone had the right to his own culture and social arrangements (Daily News, 2017b).

In the interview with a former Hungarian Ambassador to China, he also expressed that Hungary joined the EU for development and at the same time maintained its own social and cultural traditions. However, he criticised that, after 15 years, Hungary had not caught up with western European countries, but Hungarian traditions were threatened by Brussels. From Orbán’s arguments and the former Hungarian Ambassador’s comments, and linking to a broader content, it also shows that the development path with Hungarian characteristics is against the system of domination of western European countries and EU governance order which is also challenged by the Hungarian (Chinese) development path with Hungarian (Chinese) characteristics.

In terms of “double-standards”, the Hungarian leadership learn the lesson and use it not only for its own defence but also for external relations and its friends. In 2019, Minister Szijjártó commented on the argument of cooperation between China and CEE countries dividing the EU and defended the cooperation: “*It is hypocritical to accuse the CEE countries of*

‘disrupting European unity’ by cooperating with China if the same accusations were never made when western European leaders met Chinese leaders. We don’t accept double standards” (Daily News, 2019a). Criticising the EU for “*lecturing*” member states and its partners, Szijjártó argued that Brussels was frequently applying double standards towards third countries like Russia and China (Daily News, 2019d). Moreover, three years earlier, Orbán supported Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydło, who was criticised by Martin Schulz, the President of the European Parliament. He urged more respect for Poland because Hungary did not like double standards, which meant that “*someone is called to account for something not expected from others*”, therefore Hungary did not support double standards being applied to Poland (Orbán, 2016b).

The Hungarian leadership has learned the norm of “mutual respect” from China. More importantly, Hungarian leaders understand well, learn well, and apply well this norm with two minor norms, “development path with characteristics” and “double standards”, in terms of its own domestic development issues, its external bilateral relationship with China, and even supporting its friends in CEE countries, when China is directly and indirectly involved. In other words, the Hungarian government accepts the Chinese norms themselves and, more importantly, the overall structural framework of NPC.

The third theme is that Hungary recognises there is a new world order led by China. This new order is opposed to the old order dominated by western European countries. These all have a very clear target against the conventional norms and values represented by Brussels. In other words, Chinese “mutual respect” provides an alternative “normal” order challenging the old system and

the normal order centred in Brussels. The Hungarian leadership's acceptance, perceptions, and application of Chinese "mutual respect" and other norms show two layers of NPC's influence. First, the Hungarian leadership accept the norms under NPC. Second, the Hungarian leadership accepts an alternative normal order in order to partially oppose NPE.

A high ranked EU official from the Division of China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Mongolia European External Action Service expressed his concern in the interview that China was challenging the EU and universal values which the EU represented. Thus, this perception shows that what the EU and China promote are different for sure, and China is somehow located on the opposite of the EU. During another interview, the former Hungarian Ambassador blamed the EU, when he was asked who should take the credit of the successful cooperation between CEE countries and China. The former Ambassador said that it was not China dividing Europe and China was not able to do so but it was the failure of Brussels leaving CEE countries with no choices but China. Although the former Ambassador did not directly suggest that China's position and what China promoted were against the EU, China was representing something new and something alternative to CEE countries.

In 2016, Orbán suggested that the Chinese approach and the relationships between China and CEE countries were different from the traditional western one, and he opposed the western approach as "*the west represented a superior ideal and expected other parts of the world to adopt international doctrines reflecting that*" (Daily News, 2016). During his official visit to China in 2017, Orbán argued that the old model of globalisation had reached its end and "*a prominent part*

of the world was fed up with developed countries giving lectures on such things as human rights and the market economy” (Daily News, 2017b).

In the conference “China-CEE political parties dialogue”, Orbán highlighted the mutual understanding among the CCP and political parties in CEE countries, which “*is at odds with the conventional Western way of thinking*”. He illustrated more about this Western way of thinking: “*the West represents a superior ideal and culture. This is laid down in various international doctrines, and the West expects other regions of the world to also embrace these*” (Orbán. 2016a). In terms of Chinese investment and its expansion, Orbán clearly concluded that “*this trend is the exact opposite of what we’re used to and what we had been taught about the workings of the global economy*” (Daily News, 2017b).

It is very clear that for the Hungarian leadership, the old world order in the West is represented dominance and hierarchy. However, the new world led by the East and developing countries, especially China, represents equality and “mutual respect”. Orbán considered that under the old globalisation, few developed countries gave lectures about human rights, development, democracy, and the market economy, and other countries were in the receiving position. However, Chinese BRI started “*a movement in a different direction*” rather than a “*teacher-student relationship*” (Daily News, 2017b). Hungary does not only accept specific norms and values under NPC but also the alternative world order proposed by NPC. In this way, the recipient country, Hungary, recognises the new world order of NPC, more importantly, it generates a clear enemy or a barrier of rising NPC: the western old order. The NPE and old order, as the target, help the growth of NPC.

The fourth theme is that, when NPC expands to Europe, especially EU member states, it tries to avoid direct conflict against EU values and norms under NPE, because NPC is still in a learning and adjusting process. Mentioned before, the perception from the former Hungarian Ambassador is that China is not dividing Europe and China is not able to do so either.

China is learning from its external actions and making NPC stronger and more consummate by external relationships, like the one with Hungary. In 2014, the Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi said that Chinese BRI and Hungarian “Opening to the East” policy are “*clearly reinforcing each other*” (Daily News, 2014). In 2015, Hungarian foreign minister Péter Szijjártó appreciated the Chinese government’s recognition on Hungarian “Opening to the East” policy by signing a BRI programme agreement (Daily News, 2015b). The matching strategies and bilateral relationship speed the learning process of NPC.

Putting Chinese BRI in a global content, China’s partners are mainly developing countries, or the countries are facing social or development challenges, such as Pakistan and Hungary. Furthermore, President Xi’s term, “a community of shared future for mankind”, put a strong emphasis on development issues. BRI programmes are always promoted as a global development scheme by the Chinese government. In a particular recipient country, China can find a matching policy or direction, which shows that NPC is relatively flexible compared to NPE, in terms of differentials among recipient countries. Moreover, Chinese BRI and its norms and values can be minorly adjusted according to recipient countries who present a willingness to cooperate with China. Rather than focusing on major-country diplomacy, or universal security problems, China

delivers its successful model of economic development as the main course to Hungary, and this development model is different from what the EU suggests. This flexible strategy of NPC represents itself as an alternative model to the world, which avoids direct conflicts with the EU.

After European integration and the establishment of the EU, China has never changed its support for European integration and the single market. Both China and Hungary agree and recall many times that the cooperation between China and CEE countries are not only good for the region but also for the whole of Europe. In the end of his speech in the 2016 inter-party dialogue, Orbán suggested that Hungary “*do not accept restrictions of any kind on cooperation between China and our region. We are convinced that what is good for Central Europe and China serves not only the best interests of China and Central Europe, but also those of the entire European continent – including the European Union*” (Orbán, 2016a). In both press briefs of 2016 and 2017 Cooperation between China and CEE countries, Orbán also reasserted that the “16+1” cooperation served both the interests of CEE and the whole Europe (About Hungary, 2017a & Orbán, 2016c).

It is unsurprising that NPC would not directly challenge NPE and its values and norms, since NPC is still in its learning and emerging process. For Hungary, it has to maintain caution to a full embrace to NPC, because of its membership of the EU and the single market. Moreover, the domestic opposition voices cannot be ignored, as opposite parties have very different opinions on Orbán’s position on China (Šimalčík, Bajerová, Karásková, Matura, Ostrowska, & Surdel, 2019). In other words, Hungary has to balance between Brussels and Beijing. This balancing in Hungary

has an effect on China, requiring a soft approach to expand its NPC by avoiding direct conflicts with NPE and the EU interests as a whole.

Fifth, following the fourth point, compared to NPE, NPC is relatively weak at the moment, because it is still in the learning process and China's economic power maintains a strong element to recipient countries. In 2015, Orbán had a judgement already that China would soon become the strongest economy in the world (Daily News, 2015a). One year later, during the Cooperation between China and CEE conference in Riga, Orbán praised China as the most successful economy in the world (Orbán, 2016c). During the visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Budapest in 2019, Orbán argued that the reason for the fast-strengthening Hungary-China relationship was *"China's amazing development in the past few decades"* (Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister, 2019). Furthermore, Hungary perceives China as having the leading role not only on economy, but also on finance and technology. In the 2017 China-CEE Cooperation conference, Orbán said that: *"China has also become a determining factor in terms of finance and technology and Central Europe welcomes this development"* (MTI, 2017).

The Chinese role as a strong economy has an impact on its NPC and the perception of receiving countries. It is easy to think about China as an economic power, rather than a normative power. The former Hungarian Ambassador said in the interview that not the EU, not Russia, not Japan, but only China could provide such amount of foreign investment to Hungary. However, the role of a strong economy and pragmatic economic interests can serve NPC as well, because Manners (2002) suggests that one of the diffusion patterns of a normative power is transference. The receiving countries can perceive China as a successful model of development which China is also

promoting. More importantly, this successful model of development, or Chinese model, is demonstrated as a result of Chinese people led by CCP choosing its own development path with Chinese characteristics. The current relatively weak NPC is not contradicting the Chinese role as a strong economy or its economic interests, but the latter two can serve NPC and the diffusion of norms and values of NPC.

From the bilateral relationship between China and Hungary, the Hungarian leadership has been influenced by NPC. There are five main points outstanding from this bilateral relationship, in terms of NPC. First, “mutual respect” is the core norm in NPC and Hungary has well internalised this norm. Second, two other minor norms: “double standards” and “development path with characteristics” under NPC are brought to Hungary as well. Third, Hungarian leadership regards China as having the leading role in a new world order. The old order, including its norms and values, is represented by western Europe. Moreover, the old order, as a target, helps strengthening NPC in Europe. Fourth, since NPC is still in this primary stage, the learning process, China prefers not to directly counter those European values promoted by NPE. Finally, compared to NPE, NPC is relatively weak in Europe and the Chinese role as a strong economy maintains an essential element to recipient countries. However, “a strong economy” or “a successful Chinese model” can serve the diffusion of NPC as the transference mechanism, which is similar to NPE.

However, looking into the Hungary-China relationship cannot fully unfold the influence of NPC in Hungary, an EU member state. Without Chinese participation, Hungarian perception of NPC

and Hungarian adoption of Chinese norms within other relationships and engagements will provide a more comprehensive picture, which will be analysed in next chapter.

Chapter 4: Normative Power China in Hungarian other external relationships

The Hungarian leadership adopts Chinese norms and values not only when they face China but also in their other foreign relationships without Chinese participation. The adoption of NPC in Hungarian multilateral and bilateral relationships shows valid diffusion of NPC. More importantly, NPC in Hungary becomes a problem for the EU inside the Union.

The scale of using Chinese norms covers multilateral and bilateral relations, for example, Hungary in the UN and the relationship between Hungary and the Netherlands. Moreover importantly, “mutual respect” is becoming part of Hungarian foreign policy, since Chinese norms and values used by Hungarian leadership involve diverse topics, such as regional security, political issues, and development aid. It is argued that Normative Power China (NPC) has an impact on Normative Power Europe (NPE) and EU politics through a recipient country.

“Mutual respect”, as a Chinese global norm and foreign policy principle, is reflected in the bilateral relationship between China and Hungary and is also supported by Hungary in the UN as a valid universal value. On 19th November 2019, an open debate was held in the Security Council of the UN on the role of reconciliation in maintaining international peace and security. Besides the 15 members of the Security Council, the Hungarian delegation gave its statement in the meeting as well. Surprisingly, during the whole meeting, only two states mentioned “mutual respect” in their statements and neither of them were China (Security Council, 2019a & 2019b). These two states were Hungary and Bahrain. Hungarian representative, Minister Szijjártó said

that “*if we are to overcome the serious conflicts all over the world, we will have to restore honesty and mutual respect to our international discourse*” (Security Council, 2019a, p. 23). The Hungarian leadership has promoted “mutual respect” as their own value on the international stage, which shows that “mutual respect” has been internalised in Hungary and the Hungarian leadership considers it as normal.

In the same statement, another finding from the Hungary-China relationship can be observed as well: There is a new world order perceived by the Hungarian leadership. Minister Szijjártó stated that “*The world is changing very rapidly, [...] many political changes that are creating a completely new world order and are definitely increasing the number of conflicts around the world*” (Security Council, 2019a, p. 23). This new world order is not an extension of the old, namely dominated by western power, but a “completely” new world order.

The General Assembly of the UN is essential to each country not only because it is one of the six main organs of the UN, but also every state presents their fundamental positions, policies, and proposals on international issues which they most concern. Moreover, the national statements in the General Assembly are delivered by their national highest ranked officials. In other words, national statements in General Assembly present the basic principles, positions, and values of states’ foreign policy. In 2012, the President of Hungary, János Áder, gave his speech on rule of law, constitutional freedoms, and environmental protection (General Assembly, 2012). In 2013 and 2014, Hungarian national statements focused on environmental issues as well, namely water security, chemical weapons, and ozone layers (General Assembly, 2013 & 2014). Starting from

2015 to 2017, there were two consistent concerns in Hungarian national statements: regional security and terrorism, and migration (General Assembly, 2015, 2016, & 2017).

In 2017, Hungarian Minister Szijjártó indirectly expressed a strong Hungarian dissatisfaction against the EU in the General Assembly, and the determination of the Hungarian own path: *“all States have the fundamental right and responsibility to make decisions on their own — including as to whom they allow to enter their territory and whom they do not”* (General Assembly, 2017, p. 16). In 2018, Minister Szijjártó was against the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and he criticised EU and UN officials who had suggested a false context, as if migration were a fundamental human right. The same as 2017, he also indirectly suggested the uniqueness of the Hungarian nation and its demand for respect for its characteristics: *“Again, we strongly reject that definition and approach because it must be left up to the decision of the respective nation [...] We Hungarians do not think that our society would be less valuable or worse than any other society that considers itself multicultural”* (General Assembly, 2018, p. 34).

It is remarkable that in 2019, a Hungarian national statement in the General Assembly clearly mentioned “mutual respect” and underlined it as a principle.

“We base our foreign policy strategy on a principle called mutual respect. We respect our partners and their history, heritage and the decisions of their citizens. And we expect the same from our partners: that they respect our sovereignty and our specificities, which are based on our very rich history. And we expect our partners to respect the right of Hungarians to take decisions about their own country and its future” (General Assembly, 2019, p. 36).

In the Hungary-China relationship, “development with own characteristics” is one of the norms from NPC. The norm is upgraded to a new version: “with own characteristics”, which exceeds

economic and development issues. The upgraded norm “with own characteristics” has exceeded development issues to international governance and peace management, which can be found in the 2019 open debate as well. Although Minister Szijjártó did not say Hungary took its path with Hungarian characteristics, he illustrated that the Hungarian characteristic was its own identity, culture, and religion. *“I believe that an important precondition for reconciliation is the recognition of the universal right of nations and countries to maintain their national identity and cultural, historic and religious traditions”* (Security Council, 2019a, p. 23). In terms of global peace management, Minister Szijjártó presented Hungary’s own characteristics and asked for recognition and respect, which should be applied to all states. Hungary has its own characteristics, namely its own culture, history, and religion, and ask for respect in other issues and disputes.

Hungary is a recipient country of NPC and it is an extension of NPC. The norm in Hungary can have its evolution, which approves that NPC is in a learning process and it learns from the Hungary-China relationship. Moreover, this also shows the flexibility of NPC and its norms. In particular, there is barely room to adjust norms of “rule of law” or “democracy” which the EU promotes to be European values and universal values. However, Chinese norms leave room for receiving countries to modify and apply accordingly.

Minister Szijjártó explained the meaning and understanding of “mutual respect” as a principle of Hungarian foreign policy. There is no doubt that the meaning and understanding were exchanged in the bilateral relationship between Hungary and China in recent years. Moreover, since the national statement in General Assembly represents the state’s basic foreign policy and its principles, and there were no expressions on “Hungarian characteristics” and Hungarian version

of “mutual respect” until 2017, the core norm of NPC, “mutual respect”, and other values are new to Hungary. In other words, the Hungarian leadership is adopting Chinese norms and values in recent years and it is gradually influenced by NPC even in an international circumstance without China’s direct involvement.

“Mutual respect” as a new principle of Hungarian foreign policy can be reflected in its other bilateral relationships and its view on global conflicts as well. On several occasions, Minister Szijjártó suggested “mutual respect” in the relationship between Hungary and the Netherlands (Hungary today, 2019a & 2019b). Moreover, “mutual respect” was emphasised in many other Hungarian bilateral relationships, such as with the UK, Russia, Romania, Denmark, and Laos (About Hungary, 2019a, 2019b, & 2019c; & Hungarian Government, 2018 & 2019a). Regarding the trade war between the US and China, as a global conflict, Péter Szijjártó suggested that *“we hope that the United States and China, our two largest trading partners outside the European Union, can settle their disputes based on the principle of mutuality”* (Daily News, 2019c).

“Mutual respect” from NPC has been applied by different departments on different policies, such as economic trade, military cooperation, development, and bureaucrat cooperation, in terms of Hungarian foreign connections. In 2018, Minister Szijjártó said to his counterpart in Copenhagen: *“Hungarian-Danish relations must always be determined by mutual respect”* (Hungarian Government, 2018), and their discussion topics included economic cooperation, Brexit, and other regional issues. In 2019, Hungarian Defence Minister Tibor Benkő had his commemorative visit to Russia and he considered the two nations’ joint military cemetery maintenance work as *“a task that will take many long years, in this we must find cooperation, based on the principle of*

reciprocity, in the spirit of mutual respect and appreciation” (Hungarian Government, 2019b).

Furthermore, the cooperation between the Hungarian and Mongolian national statistical office also takes “mutual respect” as a cooperation base (Hungarian central statistical office, 2018).

The Hungarian leadership takes these Chinese norms and values as principles of its foreign policy. “Mutual respect” and “with own characteristics” are not only used between Hungary and China, but also between Hungary and other states. Moreover, applying this norm is not restricted in political and diplomatic issues, such as sovereignty, but extended to other external connections, such as the military. This shows that the core norms and values of NPC are internalised, and more importantly, normalised by Hungarian leadership.

The Hungarian leadership regards these emerging values as an alternative “normal” compared to the old western one, namely NPE. As a member state, Hungary who adopts NPC has extraordinary conflicts with the EU. In spring 2017, the European Parliament’s Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) prepared a report on Hungary. In September 2018, European Parliament asked the EU member states to determine whether Hungary was at risk of breaching the EU’s founding values, namely rule of law, according to Treaty Article 7. Hearings and debates were raised in EU institutions and the Hungarian government rejected all general criticisms over rule of law against Hungary. Another outstanding conflict between the Hungarian government and the EU is about the migration and refugee policies. These two examples show the conflict between two “normals” in the EU. Although China stands away from these inner-Europe issues, NPC though its recipient country, Hungary, is playing a role.

“Illegal process” and “Lack of respect” are the main responses from the Hungarian government to the EU. In the case of Article 7, the Hungarian government is not satisfied with the EU institutional functioning and the politics in the EU. For example, in his speech in the European Parliament, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said that *“we are in many respects dissatisfied with the functioning of the European Union. We are formulating criticism because we want to correct mistakes and we want to reform the European Union”* (About Hungary, 2017b). The Justice Minister of Hungary, Judit Varga, argued that if the EU were truly concerned about the rule of law in Hungary, the case could have been closed a long time before and the triggering Article 7 proceedings was *“politically-motivated”* (About Hungary, 2019d).

After the resolution passed in the European Parliament in September 2018, the Hungarian government noted:

“it is important to note, that the issues raised concerning Hungary were not and are not ‘per se’ rule of law concerns. It is unacceptable and misleading to conclude that just because of the political and media attention, infringement cases can automatically be qualified as rule of law issues. [...] Regarding Hungary, the European Commission, as guardian of the Treaties, repeatedly confirmed both during the European Parliament’s procedure, and also after that that it does not deem it necessary to launch the Article 7 (1) procedure against Hungary” (About Hungary, 2018).

“Lack of respect” was firmly argued by Prime Minister Orbán: *“There have been errors in economic policy, in migration policy, and in the level of respect due to nations. Every one of these errors must be corrected, one by one. [...] as they had proved that they don’t respect Hungary, and that they don’t respect the Hungarian people”* (About Hungary, 2019e). In other words, the Hungarian government regards policies pushed by the EU with Brussels dominance as

mistakes and these mistakes do not respect Hungarian people. There is no problem on those EU fundamental values, such as rule of law, in Hungary. However, it is the EU having these problems and Hungary proposes “mutual respect” to correct these mistakes.

In the Hungarian government note, the government defended itself and asked for “mutual respect” from the EU (About Hungary, 2018). The questions is what Hungary is asking respect for? In a response to a communication issued by the European Commission about the Hungarian government campaign (European Commission, 2019b), the Hungarian government responded: *“We want a Europe which respects the rights of nation states, builds on its Christian values, protects its communities, and is also able to preserve its security in the long term”* (About Hungary, 2019f). In 2019, in Orbán’s national statement, he argued that: *“We want a European Parliament which respects the decisions of countries and peoples about their own future, and accepts that we Central Europeans want to pursue our own path”* (Hungarian Government, 2019c).

The Hungarian government is using these new norms and values from NPC to defend itself and its “normal”, as it is the choice of Hungarian people and the Hungarian government has the right. The EU is criticised by the Hungarian government for two issues: malfunctioning and political-driven. In other words, the EU becomes the enemy against Hungary and the weapon used by the Hungarian government is the new normal terms and values of NPC. Of course, the domestic political campaign in Hungary cannot be ignored. It is not saying that the current situation is a direct result of NPC in Europe, but NPC has an important role. Moreover, in the Hungary case,

the engagement between NPE and NPC is not direct but through a mediator: the recipient country of both normative powers.

There is another similar case against Poland. The independence of the judiciary of Poland was under question and the European Parliament agreed with the Commission on the risks to the rule of law in Poland in 2018. The Hungarian government supports Poland. Back to 2016, Orbán has supported Poland against the critiques from the EU by using “double standards” and asking for more respect (Orbán, 2016b). Here, China is not involved as well. However, more importantly, it is Hungary diffusing the norms and values to another country, which, again, shows that the NPC’s norms and values are adopted and internalised by the Hungarian government.

Currently, there are still no concrete institutional changes or reforms in the EU because of the “attack” from Hungary. This does not mean that NPC though a recipient country has no practical influence on the EU or NPE. Of course, the inner-EU political interests disputes cannot be neglected. It is not the time for NPC to directly fight against NPE in the Union, but NPC and its norms and values are shaking NPE. Hungarian perceptions and actions have approved the role of NPC and NPC’s impact on the EU.

Chapter 5: The engagement between normative powers

China is an emerging normative power and it is still in the learning process. This chapter compares the diffusion and impact of Normative Power China (NPC) and Normative Power Europe (NPE). It is argued that NPC in Hungary also has the six factors of the diffusion of normative power suggested by Manners (2002). In terms of impact, the external perception is still the core. The diffusion mechanisms and overall structure have a strong impact on the engagement between NPC and NPE. From interviews and examples demonstrated in previous chapters, NPC currently has a loose structure to its norms and values.

Manners (2002) suggests six factors of NPE's diffusion: contagion, informational diffusion, procedural diffusion, transference, overt diffusion, and cultural filter. In the case of Hungary, these six factors of NPC are all visible. They are the mechanisms of diffusing norms and values under a normative power and to make them "normal" in other countries. However, these do not discuss or intensively judge the success or efficiency of a normative power, of which NPC has been demonstrated in the Hungarian case. The analysis of the diffusion of Chinese norms from the Hungary case and other examples shows that NPC is in a learning process and, to a large extent, learns from the EU.

In terms of contagion, the "virtuous model" is important because it generates attractiveness and norms and values are intentionally diffused. The rapid economic development and "mutual respect" are presented by China to the world as a "virtuous model" and ideas of this model are

sometimes unintentionally discussed in other countries. This may also answer why NPC emerges in Xi's era. Xi inherited the achievements of his predecessors, for example, China became the second largest economy in the world in 2010. In other words, China becomes a virtuous model and is capable of diffusing its normative power. In Hungary's case, its leadership sees that there is an alternative model of development, which is more attractive than the one from the EU.

Informational diffusion and procedural diffusion are tightly connected in Hungary. Informational diffusion is the result of strategic communication (Manners, 2002). There are multiple dialogues between China and Hungary and new ideas and policies are exchanged during dialogues. More importantly, in these dialogues, like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-CEE Political Parties Dialogue 2016, Chinese norms and values, programmes, are widely discussed. During the interview, the former Hungarian Ambassador to China mentioned that he met many diplomats in CEE countries in Beijing in BRI related events and there was a common argument among CEE diplomats: China is an alternative choice and the current imbalance in Europe is caused by the EU not China. The perceptions of China and its normative power are exchanged and shared through dialogues and communications and China is providing platforms for these strategic communications.

The procedural diffusion of NPC is through institutionalised dialogues. The annual "16+1" China and CEE countries cooperation and the annual summit of BRI are institutionalised. There are many new institutions established under China's dominance, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Secretariat of Cooperation between China and CEE Countries. However, it is very interesting that there is no single specific institution or agency in charge of Chinese

global strategy: BRI. NPC may construct a different way of informational and procedural diffusion, but NPC is still in the learning process to try something conventional in the western order to find the best for itself.

Transference diffusion happens when the EU exchanges goods, trade, aid or technical assistance with others through substantive or financial means (Manners, 2002). In Hungary, China has become the largest economic partner outside the EU and, more importantly, Chinese norms and values are exported together with Chinese substantial and financial means. NPC's overt diffusion is reflected by the Chinese activist approach on the international stage and its global institutions, such as China's activist role in the WHO during the Covid-19 global pandemic, Confucius Institutes and Chinese police force participating in joint inspection operations with Italian police in Rome.

The last factor, the cultural filter, is based on the interplay between the construction of knowledge and the creation of social or political identity (Manners. 2002). The Chinese company, Huawei, signed an agreement with the University of Szeged in Hungary in 2019 that Huawei provides funding to 1200 Hungarian researchers to visit China for telecommunication training; and in May 2019, Huawei became the second most popular smartphone brand in Hungary (Division of Economy, 2019). The cultural exchange and brands building can help to construct a positive identity of China to facilitate its norms' diffusion. Through Chinese companies operating overseas, language institutes offering Chinese courses, and Panda diplomacy, the new understanding of China and Chinese people is constructed. These understanding and knowledge reshape the new identity of China with its norms and values.

Compared to NPE, NPC has a looser structure of norms and values. “*NPC is offering a menu book for free-choice but NPE is presenting a pre-set menu*”, the former Hungarian Ambassador to Beijing suggested this when he was asked about the overall difference between NPC and NPE. What the former Ambassador suggested was that China did not promote its norms and values in a whole package, but the recipient country could freely choose under what norms they could cooperate and how to cooperate. From the Hungarian case, the three main norms found, “mutual respect”, “development with own characteristics”, and “double standards” are consistent and organically complement to each other. However, they are not always presented collectively and free to choose. In other words, the norms and values of NPC are not bound.

The current loose structure of NPC is determined by its hybrid ideology. This loose structure links to its learning process in practice. NPC is emerging and it has not established a solid and sustainable ideological base yet. The EU norms and values, or “universal norms” as called by a high-ranked EU official from the European Commission in an interview, have legal bases from treaties and agreements and these norms and values are constructed under the dominant liberalism ideology. However, China is a relatively new player in the liberal international order and its ideology base, especially for foreign policies, is hybrid. China got rid of ideological war after its opening-up reform in 1978 and it joined the WTO in 2001. China’s current hybrid ideology on foreign policy is deep rooted in its domestic governance, and the legitimacy and survival of the Chinese Communist Party. As argued in Chapter 2, China was not able to establish its universal norms and values until Xi Jinping’s regime. Moreover, this hybrid ideology requires China to take a more ambitious role in the pre-dominant liberal system, such as in the

UN and establishing its own international organisations, and explore an alternative order at the same time. Thus, in fact, China is doing something the same as the West used to do and is doing and China is also doing something new at the same time.

Comparing the EU and China, there are three reasons which may put the EU in a disadvantageous position in the engagement between NPE and NPC, the loose structure of NPC, binding European norms and universal norms, and NPC emerging environment. The loose structure of NPC and its flexibility is the first reason. This loose structure has two impacts on Hungary or a recipient country. First, the recipient country has more flexibility to adopt Chinese norms and values. Second, currently, NPC does not squeeze the room of its counterpart in Hungary. NPC does not require Hungary to abandon European values or quit the Union. It is not a zero-sum game and Hungary is influenced by two normative powers at the same time. However, it is remarkable that Hungarian domestic alienation from the EU gives a green light to the diffusion of Chinese norms. Normative power does not suggest military or physical oppression, which means that the receivers need to open the door to receive other norms.

The second reason is that the idea that European norms/values are universal norms/values restricts the diffusion of NPE. Since the EU norms are woven into a tight liberal world order, binding European norms to universal norms make the EU lack of flexibility on normative power. During the interview, when asked about European values, the official from the EEAS highlighted that: “those are not European values, those are universal values”. This idea of equalling European norms/values to universal norms/values may present a superiority position to other countries, for example, PM Viktor Orbán argues that the west represents a superior ideal and expects others to

follow (Orbán, 2016a). The superiority position makes some member states, like Hungary, revolted because NPE regulates and limits more on recipient countries, leaving less freedom to them on policymaking than NPC.

Furthermore, this idea can also close the opportunity to understand other alternative norms and values, namely from NPC. During the interviews, both EU officials admitted that they did not fully understand Chinese norms, for example, “a community of shared future for mankind”, one of the EU officials does not think there is a community which contains all populations because people do not share the same culture and values. EU officials do not consider these Chinese norms and values as being globally persuasive because Chinese norms are not linked with universal values, namely protection of human rights, rule of law, and democracy. While, European norms and values of NPE are bounded with these universal values.

Although both officials admitted that China was an emerging normative power, one official from the EEAS directly had the following comment: “The world and solutions on many issues need China. China’s norms cannot be a threat to the EU because they are not universal values”. In other words, China is powerful and the world needs China, however, China needs to follow universal norms and values, which are also European norms and values. This “superior” idea restricts the EU from understanding the others, but other countries may not have this problem, such as Hungary.

Third, China is relatively more prepared and experienced than the EU, in terms of the engagement of normative power. NPC is an emerging normative power and it is still learning

from the EU. China went through the socialisation from the West since its opening-up reform and it learned a lot in the twenty years of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao period. In other words, NPC emerges from an environment of interactions of norms and values. China is still a one-party state led by the Chinese Communist Party. However, the elite-class has learned a lot from the west and liberalism has been partly socialised in China. Moreover, the loose structure of NPC shows that China does not regard its norms and values as being granted to all. Different from the EU, China is clearly aware of other universal norms and values, although its “mutual respect” is declared as a principle for all states and for the benefit of all.

Emilian Kavalski and Cho (2018) assess NPE and NPC in a parallel model. However, it needs to be emphasised again, from the history of NPC’s evolution and its diffusion in Hungary, NPC is in a learning process and NPC has elements from the EU, which is not a purely parallel model. NPC cannot emerge only from China’s domestic factors but with the “help” of the EU. Thus, considering its composition and evolution, China is more prepared and experienced in the engagement of normative power. The EU must take actions towards NPC which will be tough for the EU, because the EU is a new player, in terms of facing another relatively opposite normative power, while China and its normative power are rising in the circumstance of engagement.

Conclusion

China is an emerging normative power and it is still in a learning process. The conventional and strong normative power, the EU, is challenged by China and its Normative Power China (NPC). Although the EU is proud of its norms and values, a fire has been lit in its backyard. This paper analyses the influence of NPC on the EU and takes Hungary as a study case. It is argued that China's norms and values are diffusing inside the Union through member states.

The short review of China's foreign policy shows that NPC is emerging in Xi Jinping's regime. However, the impact and the diffusion of NPC need to be analysed by external perceptions. The Hungarian perceptions are conceptualised from a large number of leaders' speeches and comments, and interviews with high-ranked officials in Hungary and the EU. There are two sections illustrating Hungarian perceptions on NPC. First, in the Hungary-China relationship, "mutual respect", as the core norm, "development with own characteristics", and "double standards" are adopted by the Hungarian leadership. Hungary is convinced that there is a new world order led by the East, namely China, and the old world order is declining. Moreover, NPC is still learning from the Hungary-China relationship; and compared to Normative Power Europe (NPE), NPC is relatively weak. China's identity as a strong economic power remains an essential element to support the Hungarian positive perception on NPC, which empowers Chinese norms.

China's norms and values are not only applied in Hungary-China bilateral relationships but also in Hungary's other external relationships. "Mutual respect" has become a principle of Hungarian

foreign policy, since Chinese norms and values used by Hungarian leadership involve diverse topics, such as regional security, political issues, and development aid. In the example of Article 7 against Hungary, China's norms and values from NPC are applied by the Hungarian government to defend itself and its "normal". In short, NPC as an alternative "normal" has convinced Orbán's government, who in turn is shaking the conventional EU "normal" system from inside the Union.

Comparing the normative powers from China and the EU, they have strategic differences in their structure. NPC has a looser structure than NPE. There is a vivid metaphor between NPC and NPE, according to a former Hungarian Ambassador to China, what China offers is an alternative menu book of free choices but what the EU promotes is like a pre-set menu. Moreover, the EU is less experienced and prepared in the current world order with another normative power emerging.

Taking China as a normative power contributes to the theorising of normative power. The concept of NPE is strongly Europocentric. It is remarkable that the emergence of NPC is not purely from China, but the EU provides a model. In other words, a new normative power can derive from interaction and learning. The self-centric and superior position of Normative Power Europe, or the West, regards their norms and values as universal and the only one in the world. However, this monopolistic model of norms and values is challenged by the emergence of China's normative power. The future research agenda should pay more attention to the new structure of normative powers in the world and their engagement.

The fire is inside the EU and what the EU should do is seriously consider China as a normative power combining with other sources of powers, rather than a military power or just a huge market. The EU, its bureaucracies, and its officials should be more open-minded to understand more about Chinese norms and values. After forty years of high-speed economic development, China comes to another turning point, which opens a second opportunity for the West, including the main actor: the EU, to strengthen its normative power and to re-socialise China. In practice, for example, the EU may focus more and take more ambitious and constructive actions on the Belt and Road Initiative. If the emergence of NPC and its diffusion are a fire in the Union, which is gradually burning and shaking the Union, the EU should not and cannot directly put out the fire. The EU should take the lead and turn the troubling fire into a benefit, using its light and heat, for all good.

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Appendix I – Interview information

There are in total three interviewees who accepted my interview requests. The interviews were semi-structured. Because of the pandemic this year, all interviews were conducted in distance. All interviewees gave permissions to record the whole interview and some of them asked for anonymity. Moreover, it is important to remark that some interviewees stated that the comments and answers did not necessarily represent their institutions. The details of interviews are listed below:

Date	Interviewee	Duration	Communication methods
10/4/2020	Former Hungarian Ambassador to Beijing	61:06 min	Skype
16/4/2020	High-ranked official in the Division of China, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Mongolia ASIAPAC. 4, European External Action Service	31:53 min	Phone calling
17/4/2020	High-ranked official in DG DEVCO, European Commission	36:28 min	Skype