



UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES (CES)

THE EU'S RESPONSE TO CHINA AS A GROWING ACTOR ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

Text analysis on the EU-Africa strategies of 2007 and
2021

Sandra Daniel

Abstract

Bachelor thesis: 15 credits
Programme: European Studies Programme
Level: First Cycle
Semester year: Spring 2022
Supervisor: Michael Schulz
EU Foreign Policy, China, African continent, Neocolonialism, Soft Power, Hard Power, Smart Power, Governance, Human Rights, Security, Multilateralism, Normative Power
Keyword:
Word count: 11 730

Aim: This thesis aims at examining the EU's power usage on China's role on the African continent. In particular, this thesis aims at synthesising the EU's role as a normative actor in the international system through analysing the **EU-Africa strategies** from **2007** and **2021**.

Theory: In order to conduct this comparative analysis, Joseph S. Nye, Jr theoretical framework on Power, will outline the comparative analysis on the power usage. Soft Power as coined by Nye, Jr, is non coercive power, this in opposition to Hard Power that presumes coercive power. Smart Power was coined as a response to amplify each Soft Power and Hard Power jointly.

Method: Through conducting a comparative qualitative text analysis on the EU-Africa strategies of 2007 respectively 2021, I aim to deepen the discourse on the EU's response to China's rise on the African continent as conceptualised in the EU-Africa strategies.

Result: As much of the previous research demonstrates, the EU is a Soft Power actor and of particular interest is that the EU uses Soft Power on traditionally Hard Power coined elements.

Table of content

1. Problem Presentation	1
1.1 Historical Background	2
2. Previous Research	4
2. 1. Theory	7
3. Method and Material	9
3.1 Method	9
3.2 Material and Sources	11
3.3 Ethics and Positionality	13
4. Results and Discussion	13
5. Conclusions	18
5.1 Reflection on Problem Formulation	18
5.2 Reflection of Result	19
5.3 Theoretical Implication	21
5.4 Future Research	22
References	

1. Problem presentation

This thesis objective is to understand the European Union as a Foreign Policy Actor. Therefore, this thesis seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the EU's response to the case of China as an emerging actor on the African continent. This thesis is written in a time where there are high diverging and opposing lines on global governance in the international scene and between the EU and China. China's bottom note in the global democracy index¹ and China's refusal of a universal definition on Human Rights, through the Four Cardinal Principles demonstrate this. China has quickly remodelled global politics in its new role. This as either 1. an established actor having departed from its emerging role or 2. carrying both the role of an established actor in global politics to still emerging. With its Belt and Road Initiative, China has remodelled the prerequisites for international collaboration²This in particular on the African continent who as a whole has seen more engagement from the Chinese state and its affiliated companies in recent years.

Against this backdrop, the question of how the EU responds to the changed political landscape with China's new presence on the African continent will be vital. Recent developments apart from China's positionality also includes changes in positionality and policy formulations within African regional institutions and nation states, as well as with EU-Africa relations. This stresses the need for understanding the EU response as demonstrated in the EU-Africa strategies of 2007 and 2021. As we are studying how the EU acts within EU-Africa relations, i.e a relationship and given that a pertaining picture is that power is relational³, this thesis will look at the concept of power.

My research contribution will be a deeper understanding of the EU's Power usage in its response to the case of China as an emerging actor on the African continent. It is often stated that the EU uses Soft Power and is a normative power in its Foreign Policy. This in combination with that the EU is re-coupling its engagement on the African continent demonstrates a research need for deepening the understanding of the EU's Foreign Policy in this contextualised case. Adding to the research need is whether this Soft Power is still implemented, in a relation and context where for instance High Stake Politics like Geopolitics, that is heavily Hard Power coded, play a bigger part. Therefore the overarching research question that delimits the aim will be the following: *"How can we understand the EU's response on the African continent in relation to China's actions?"*.

The problem formulation will be supported by the following specified research questions:

1. How has the EU's Power Usage on Geopolitics, Security, Governance and Human Rights changed in the materials from 2007-2021?
2. How has the EU's Power Usage on Geopolitics, Security, Governance and Human Rights been motivated in the materials from 2007-2021?

¹ [Autocratization Changing Nature: Democracy Report 2022](#), V-Dem Institute (2022), p. 13. Retrieved: 2022-03/08, 2.53 PM.

² Qingjiang Kong Mindu "Is the 'Belt and Road' Initiative the Chinese Vision of Global Governance? in Martinico, Giuseppe, Wu Xueyam's A Legal Analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative - Towards a New Silk Road (2020), p. 19.

³ Kaj Sköldberg, Maktens många ansikten: Teorier och idéer om makt under två och ett halvt tusen år, Studentlitteratur (2014), p. 104. Retrieved: 2022-05/25.

1.1 Historical Background

For Europe and the EU, the African continent has long been a given sphere of influence. Politics, culture and economics such as development aid, trade deals, arms deals and foreign development investments (FDI)⁴ have been important in the diverse relations. Europe and the former colonial states lost its power advantage and role as imperial powers during the decolonization and the third anticolonial movement. Western powers then ascribed Europe, the role of opposing and countering the growing influence of other powers and emerging actors like China and the then Soviet Union in Sub-Saharan Africa.⁵ This historical background is important as it can help us understand why the EU believes the EU needs to respond to anything not occurring in the EU. The EU “responding” has to do with the colonial legacies of viewing former colonies as an extension or a replica of former colonial states and part of the colonial states' sphere of influence.⁶ In contemporary times, China has shifted from the role of the global challenger of international norms. China is now a constituent in the international system⁷, that challenges or even “dismantles ” the international system from within. A clear example of this is China's refusal of a universal definition of human rights⁸, while being a key player and central power in international organisations founded on these universal definitions and normative bases. The Liberal International World Order's crucial component of multilateralism harmonises the way for states to pursue their national interests, in part to prevent war and conflicts through Universal Norms and dependency.⁹

The added element of connected spheres of influence provide incentives for states, particularly European states and the EU, to be normative powers. Within this framework, using military force or similar coercive power that is so telling of Hard Power, is less used in comparison to Soft Power. This as Soft Power do not encompass direct coercive mechanisms. The usage of Smart Power, that is the amplification of both Hard Power and Soft Power, is also utilized within this framework. It is in light of Universal Norms and behaviours that the EU response to China as an emerging actor on the African continent is particularly relevant. Universal Norms and behaviours are important within economic and cultural globalisation, where states and nations political and economic infrastructure (for instance supply chains) are heavily entwined¹⁰. This can also help us understand EU Foreign Policy in this contextualised case.

An aspect with significant value for the research context is Sino-Africa relations during the parallel Cold War and third decolonization wave. More to-be-states, mainly African states, rebelled not only against colonialism but also against loyalty to either of the Western and Soviet poles, especially the Western pole. As the Cold War centred power to two main poles, the states leaned towards support from the Soviet Union and/or China. Much of the reasons

⁴ Ebner, Julia, “The Sino-European race for Africa’s minerals: When two quarrel a third rejoices”, *Resources Policy* 43 (2015), p. 113. Retrieved: 2021-11/15, 02.14 PM.

⁵ Kluth, Michael, “The European Union and Sub-Saharan Africa - from intervention towards deterrence”, *African Security Review* (22.1), Institute for Security Studies (2013), p. 22. Retrieved: 2021-11/18, 10.38 AM.

⁶ Ebner, Julia, “The Sino-European race for Africa’s minerals: When two quarrel a third rejoices”, *Resources Policy* 43 (2015), p. 112. Retrieved: 2021-11/15, 02.14 PM.

⁷ Zhao Quansheng: *Changes and Continuities in Chinese Foreign Policy and Policymaking: Global Perspectives on Foreign Policy of Major Powers*, Academic Foundation (2016), p. 113. Retrieved: 2021-11/19, 16.36 PM.

⁸ Goldstein, Avery, “A Rising China’s Growing Presence” in “China’s Global Engagement - Cooperation, competition and influence in the 21th Century ”, edited by deLisle Jacques, Goldstein, Avery, Brookings Institution Press (2017), p. 20. Retrieved: 2021-11/19, 5.44 PM.

⁹ Steger B, Manfred, *Globalisation - A very short introduction*, Oxford University Press (2017), p. 42. Retrieved: 2021/11-18, 08.48 AM.

¹⁰ Steger B, Manfred, *Globalisation - A very short Introduction*, Oxford University Press (2017), p. 36. Retrieved: 2021/11-18, 08.42 AM.

for this Non-Aligned Movement was in the name of promised South-South Cooperation.¹¹ I The Bandung Conference of 1955 and China's accumulated political capital for supporting African states in decolonization as well as the foundation of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) serve as a main factor explaining the diverse relations we see today within the span of Sino-Africa relations. Note that for China's support in decolonization and anticolonialism, the price was "South-South"-support for the "One China"-policy in international organisations¹². China accumulated strong support for its "One China"-policy through this method, as the case of Taiwan demonstrates¹³. To this day the notion of South-South cooperation as well as China's (conditioned) allyship in decolonization is a common ground for the steady rise of Sino-Africa relations from a national perspective as well as when looking at regional institutions.

China's interest on the African continent is driven by the same interests of other traditional powers which is resources. The continent of Africa as a whole does not lack resources. To this day fully harvesting the benefits of the resources is the issue, as the theory of resource curse demonstrates.¹⁴ We can see this in the way that China as well as the EU's role differ depending on the possibilities of resource extraction in African countries. In Rwanda, that "/.. / is resource poor, has relatively small internal markets and substantive challenges in reducing poverty."¹⁵ China's engagement is mostly driven by project aid, with not much larger engagement like large scale infrastructure. However, in the case of Mozambique where "/.. / the internal market of Mozambique is comparatively small, discoveries of substantive gas and coal deposits make the country a destination for investments, and potentially an important source of energy."¹⁶, China's engagement consists of project aid and infrastructure loans amounting to the role of Mozambique's top three bilateral trading partners.¹⁷ Particularly in the case of Angola, and similar countries in resources, China's engagement consists of "comprehensive packages of loans, trade and investments", particularly, infrastructure for oil in return.¹⁸

The aim of this thesis is therefore to conceptualise the EU response to emerging China on the African continent. This through comparing the EU-Africa strategies of 2007 and 2021. For the sake of the aim, it is very important to point out that the case of China as an emerging actor, is only an instrumental case and not the primary study object in this thesis, as the study object is EU Power Usage in its Foreign Policy. Through using Joseph S. Nye theory on Power and the concepts of Soft Power, Hard Power and Smart Power, this thesis seeks to

¹¹ Bodomo, Adams, Africa-China-Europe relations: Conditions and Conditionalities, *Journal of International Studies* (2009), p. 121.

Retrieved: 2021/11/18, 10.01 AM. Chan, Gérald, China and global governance - Evolving Approaches in Chinese Foreign Policy under Xi, edited by: Boon, Tiang Hoo, *Politics in Asia Series*, Routledge (2017), p. 163-164. Retrieved: 2021-11/19, 6.00 PM.

¹² George T, Yu, China, Africa and Globalisation: The China Alternative. [Institute for Security and Development Policy](#) (2009), p. 9.

Retrieved: 2021/11-18, 10.05 AM.

¹³ Take a quick look at a map on [Taiwan-Africa relations](#). Eswatini is the only country with only formal relations with Taiwan, and not with China, solely looking at the African continent. Retrieved: 2021-11/18, 11.35 AM. Shinn, H David on 'China-Africa Ties in Historical Context' in *China-Africa Economic Transformation*, edited by Oqubay, Arkebe, Lin, Yifu, Justin, Oxford Scholarship Online (2019), p.63.

¹⁴ Ebner, Julia, "The Sino-European race for Africa's minerals: When two quarrel a third rejoices", *Resources Policy* 43 (2015), p. 112. Retrieved: 2021-11/15, 02.14 PM.

¹⁵ Grimm Sven, Hackensch, "China in Africa: What challenges for a reforming European Union Development Policy? Illustrations from country cases", *Development Policy Review*, (2017), p. 556. Retrieved: 2021-11/18, 11.01 AM.

¹⁶ Grimm Sven, Hackensch, "China in Africa: What challenges for a reforming European Union Development Policy? Illustrations from country cases", *Development Policy Review*, (2017), p. 557. Retrieved: 2021-11/18, 11.11 AM.

¹⁷ Grimm Sven, Hackensch, "China in Africa: What challenges for a reforming European Union Development Policy? Illustrations from country cases", *Development Policy Review*, (2017), p. 558. Retrieved: 2021-11/18, 11.15 AM.

¹⁸ Grimm Sven, Hackensch, "China in Africa: What challenges for a reforming European Union Development Policy? Illustrations from country cases", *Development Policy Review*, (2017), p. 559. Retrieved: 2021-11/18, 11.20 AM.

deepen the discourse on the EU's power usage, and as a result, how the EU relates to the world and the international system.

2. Previous research

A research perspective is that EU Foreign Policy is entwined with European National Identity. This in the sense that identity formation and formulation is fundamental to the formulation of one's acts, this as formulated by Aggestam.¹⁹ In other words, the definition of "we" and what this "we" do not encapsulate, play a factor in EU Foreign Policy. Parallel to the discussion on postcolonial spheres of influence, this tells us that where the EU thinks EU ends is crucial for policy development. This in the way actors seek to meet and define their interests based on identity formation. There are plenty of identity formations that are relevant in EU Foreign Policy, for instance the notion(s) of Europe and a European ("What is Europe and who is European?") and the identity formulations of member states. Identity formation and actor formation exists within the processes of state-individual or member states-EU, all that is required is an inner or external community to define.

For identity formation it is important to remember that the effect is created in a two-way sided relationship. This as identity formation itself is conceptualised and conceptualises a worldview, that in particular development policies, need to not only be grounded in "learning by doing", but also "learning by others doing". This means capacity building in the EU's actorness as a facilitator and interpreter of policies in overall external relations.²⁰ It is crucial to point out that we can only "learn" from those who we conceptualise as having "agency", this as a reference to discourses on agency/structure in environmental research.²¹ This is in argument of stressing the development of the discussion on the power usage of the EU. The argument being that power usage demonstrates identity formation and act formation, and is relational.²²

The nature of EU Foreign Policy clearly demonstrates that conceptualising the EU as a Foreign Policy Actor requires us to think of European integration. One can not disconnect EU actorness from EU member states, especially in Foreign Policy.²³ Challenges to Common EU Foreign Policy is not resources counted in people and money. The challenge is the actual development of a common approach, to the usage as well as coordination of methods and the essence of policies, and to speak with one voice.²⁴ However, as the result of European integration within the EU, there is evidence that member states do not always define their own national interest at first, heading to the EU to negotiate at last. According to Thomas²⁵ the trend is that member states do seek an EU approach, to later push from home.

¹⁹ Aggestam, Lisbeth, *Role Identity and the Europeanisation of Foreign Policy: A Politico-Cultural Approach: Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*, Manchester University Press (2018), p. 3. Retrieved: 2021-11/18, 17.20 PM.

²⁰ Serban, D Ilena, Agency and Governance in European Union International Development, *Third World Quarterly* (2021), p. 13-14. Retrieved: 2021/11-18, 18.11 PM.

²¹ Berkes, Fikret. Kislalioglu, Mina. Folke, Carl. Gadgil, Madhav, *Exploring Basic Ecological Unit: Ecosystem-Like Concepts in Traditional Societies*, 1.5 Ecosystem, Springer. (1998). Retrieved: 2021/11-18, 18.17 PM.

²² Kaj Sköldbberg, *Maktens många ansikten: Teorier och idéer om makt under två och ett halvt tusen år*, Studentlitteratur (2014), p. 104. Retrieved: 2022-05/25.

²³ Thomas C, Daniel, *Making EU Foreign Policy: National Preferences, European Norms and Common Policies*, Palgrave MacMillian UK (2011), p.4. Retrieved: 2021-11/19, 11.17 AM.

²⁴ Niemann, Arne, Huigens, Judith, *The European Union's role in the G8: a principal-agent perspective*, *Journal of European Public Policy* (2011), p. 430. Retrieved: 2021/11-19, 11.34 AM.

²⁵ Thomas C, Daniel, *Making EU Foreign Policy: National Preferences, European Norms and Common Policies*, Palgrave MacMillian UK (2011), p. 10. Retrieved: 2021-11/19, 11.45 AM.

This is to say that identity formation with the member states does not exclude an EU identity formation. Perhaps EU identity formation works as an extension of member states identity formation, this of course to various degrees and in different ways. Identities can clash, but they do not automatically exclude one another. If we use the Foreign Policy Declaration of Sweden (2021)²⁶ to demonstrate parallel identity formations of a member state, we can capture that “EU”, an abbreviation for the European Union, is mentioned in exactly this way thirty times. We can also capture the Swedish word for Europe i.e “Europa” four times and the Swedish term for European Security Order “Europeiska Säkerhetsordningen” three times, and this in just a nine page PDF. The point is that the very prerequisite for the development of the EU as a Foreign Policy actor is that The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) serves as a political dimension, to the national one.

These two norms are therefore crucial in EU-policy making: “././ joint action as an intrinsic value” and “consistency and coherence in EU policy-making across time and issue-areas”²⁷ Substantial and procedural benchmarks to policies. In the case of today’s EU are Human Rights and Multilateralism.²⁸ However, the benchmarks are dynamic and subject to changes in the political arena. As we have stipulated the benchmarks, the natural step would be to head on to reviewing the literature on the EU as a normative power. A clear definition of “normative power” was made even before the millennia²⁸ shift, through the definition of a power that has the “Ability to shape conceptions of ‘normal’”²⁹. Normative power helps us conceptualise the EU as an actor that not only shapes conceptions of what this normal should be in the future, but also what this normal and (un)normal is now. The definition of “normal” depends on who is in charge, and the actor's particular - range, depth and extension - of sphere of influence. Perhaps the most important ground to stand on with regards to EU as a Foreign Policy Actor is therefore just this following formulation connecting normative bases with normative actions:

“The concept of normative power is an attempt to suggest 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. It is built on the crucial, and usually overlooked observation that the most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is. Thus my presentation of the EU as a normative power has an ontological quality to it – that the EU can be conceptualised as a changer of norms in the international system; a positivist quantity to it – that the EU acts to change norms in the international system; and a normative quality to it – that the EU should act to extend its norms into the international system.”²⁹

This conceptualisation will serve as the basis for the understanding of the EU as a normative actor, and thus the understanding of an EU response to the case of China as an emerging actor on the African continent. Note that normative power does not mean inherently good or bad, it means that the specific normative actor conceptualises themselves as all things on the benign spectrum (rational, good, virtuous, righteous, etc.).

²⁶ Minister for Foreign Affairs, Linde, Ann, 2019-, Government of Sweden’s Foreign Policy Declaration of 2021, [Regeringen](#) (2021). Retrieved: 2021-11/19. 12.22. PM.

²⁷ Thomas C, Daniel, Making EU Foreign Policy: National Preferences, European Norms and Common Policies, Palgrave MacMillian UK (2011), p. 14. Retrieved: 2021-11/19, 11.45 AM.

²⁸ Manners, Ian. Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms, *JCMS* (40,2), pp. 235-258, (2002), p. 240. Retrieved: 2021/11-19. 2.21 PM.

²⁹ Manners, Ian. Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms, *JCMS* (40,2), pp. 235-258, (2002), p. 252. Retrieved: 2021/11-19. 2.35 PM.

The EU and the Chinese state overlap in economic interests on the African continent, but the actors vary in the usage of methods and behaviour in processes. Doctrines on sovereignty and governance serve as the biggest divider between the two actors. EU development, trade and to some extent also political relations are conditional with its normative Soft Power dimension on Human Rights and Democracy on governance. China also with its Soft Power is normative and conditional upon support for its One China Policy. This conditionality is not on the African states sovereignty and domestic governance. In terms of diverging doctrines between the EU and China as actors on the African continent, the debate on conditions and conditionalities is prevalent in the EU discourse.³⁰

Much of the discourse on the EU's response to China as an emerging actor on the African continent deals with the EU as an actor within the international system. For example, the multilateral dialogue between China and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD), through its Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the very committee that manages the whole development and aid infrastructure, is driven by the EU.³¹ This is as result to that: "EU policymakers have identified the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation and its Development Assistance Committee as the most promising forum for engaging in a multilateral dialogue with China on Africa."³² Further on there is also some research on the trilateral dialogue between the EU, China and varying actors on the African continent (mostly the African Union). Both the multilateral dialogue within the OECD-framework and the trilateral dialogue, especially contextualised as the EU response to China as an emerging actor on the African continent, has a room for in previous research.

Previous research clearly articulates that traditional frameworks like the OECD with DAC at hand have been instrumental in the EU response. New frameworks have been constructed as a response to China's changed role and relations on the African continent. EU efforts have been made to depart from bilateralism to rather a bleak attempt at an arrival in trilateralism. China's new role is a key factor to the EU trilateral attempts. So is the reformation of the EU development structure and the way in which the EU views the continent of Africa, including the agency of its institutions and "its development potential".³³ Agency is connected to the way in which actors, in this case the EU acts towards and with, as well as relates to actors on the African continent.³⁴

The notion that the EU institutions reformed role on the African continent is due to China's reformed role is contested³⁵. In previous research - the European Commission, European Parliament and the Council of the European Union - takes on different roles as described in the following sentences: "The European Commission sought to affirm the EU's aspiration to become an influential global actor; the European Parliament projected its preference for a

³⁰ Stahl, Anna Katharina. [Contrasting Rhetoric and Converging Security Interests of the European Union and China in Africa](#). Journal of Current Chinese Affairs (40, 4), pp. 147-173 (2011), p. 148. Retrieved: 2021/12-15. 12-04 PM.

³¹ Stahl, Anna Katharina. [EU-China-Africa Trilateral Relations in a Multipolar World. Hic Sunt Dracones](#). The European Union in International Affairs, Palgrave MacMillian, p. 73. Retrieved: 2021/12-15, 1.30 PM.

³² Stahl, Anna Katharina. [EU-China-Africa Trilateral Relations in a Multipolar World. Hic Sunt Dracones](#). The European Union in International Affairs, Palgrave MacMillian, p. 65. Retrieved: 2021/12-15, 3.18 PM.

³³ Stahl, Anna Katharina. [EU-China-Africa Trilateral Relations in a Multipolar World. Hic Sunt Dracones](#). The European Union in International Affairs, Palgrave MacMillian, (2018), p. 91. Retrieved: 2021-12/15. 4.40 PM.

³⁴ Leroy, Marcel. Africa and the EU: Perspectives and Prospects. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2009), p.3. Retrieved: 2021-12/15. 7.41 PM.

³⁵ Grimm Sven, Hackensch, "China in Africa: What challenges for a reforming European Union Development Policy? Illustrations from country cases", Development Policy Review, (2017), p. 550, 562. Retrieved: 2021-12/15, 6.09 PM.

value-based development policy, blended with paternalistic overtones; the Council of the European Union was driven more by the emotional reactions of some member states, who did not want to lose their position as Africa's main reference point."³⁶ This perspective of diverging objectives within the EU is noted but as we conceptualise the EU as a single actor in this thesis, the perspective will not be developed further on. Instead, as previously stipulated, my thesis will focus on the EU as a single actor. This in order to gain a deeper understanding of EU actorness, meaning how the EU acts in power usage and relates to the international system.

Theory 2.1

Nye's Soft Power theory will set the theoretical framework in this thesis. According to Nye - power is relational and an accumulative force that is not necessarily measurable. As Nye developed the Soft Power-theory and the concepts of Hard Power, Soft Power and Smart Power, Nye was clear in stating that "Power is not only the ability to get the outcomes one want." Nye also stated that: "Power is the ability to *influence the behaviour of others* to get the outcomes one wants." Emphasis is put on attraction and "changing hearts and minds" and not only instilling fear using force to change the actions of another actor. Nye conceptualises this power,³⁷ i.e Soft Power. The names for the concepts do not demonstrate how hard (as in how successful) a specific power type is. Instead, they reference how the power aims to reach a change of action or behaviour in another actor, i.e its effect. The foundation for the development of this thesis is Manners theoretical framework on normative power, which the theory of Soft Power is part of.

Central to the field of normative power is that the actors who are normative powers tend to have a normative basis. In the case of the EU, the normative basis is the benchmarks covering Human Rights and Multilateralism. For Manners, what is key is not solely that the EU is a normative power, but rather, that:

"The concept of normative power is an attempt to suggest 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."³⁸

This suggests that formulating, acknowledging and incorporating normative basis in policies, enables the EU to act in the international setting in a normative way. It is almost like the existence of normativeness in thinking, in ideational discourse, enables normativeness in actions, in political behaviour. This political behaviour postulates various ways of being a normative power, in this case a Smart Power and/or Soft Power.³⁹

Hard Power is military power and economic inducements such as payment and bribes, that seeks to change the direct, short-term actions of an actor. Soft Power aims to change and

³⁶ Carbone, Maurizio. The European Union and China's Rise in Africa: Competing visions, external coherence and trilateral cooperation. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group (2011), p. 203. Retrieved: 2021-12/15. 5.27 PM.

³⁷ Nye S, Joseph. *Soft Power - The means to success in world politics*, Public Affairs (2004), p. x. Retrieved: 2021-05/30, 03.58 AM.

³⁸ Manners, Ian. Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms, *JCMS* (40,2), pp. 235-258, (2002), p. 252. Retrieved: 2022/04-05. 09.58 PM.

³⁹ Manners, Ian. Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms, *JCMS* (40,2), pp. 235-258, (2002), p. 244-245. Retrieved: 2022/04-05. 09.58 PM.

influence the actions of an actor, i.e “what the hands do”. This is done through “changing the hearts and minds” of the actor. The ability to attract, either through your policies, culture in the broadest sense, and/or values is key in this second face of Power. Here, you use dialogue and focus more on long-term change and the absolute goal using Soft Power is that when “done well”, although not static, there ought not be a need for Soft Power anymore. The other actor wants what you want and your policies, values or culture (however you define it) is attractive enough. In a way, using Soft Power is a way to change the whole incentive structure. To make your own objective attractive, and to make it visible for the actor using attraction. Hard Power on the other hand is using incentives such as (inducements) carrots or sticks (threats). Note that Hard Power does not have a goal to change the incentive structure, just provide incentive, and this is fundamentally what differentiates the power types.⁴⁰

In a fine balance between Soft and Hard Power, we have Smart Power. Smart Power is the combination of the different power types. Characteristic for a Smart Power actor is the active usage of different elements in the power types in policy. However, not all elements of Hard and Soft Power could be combined in a way that it amounts to Smart Power. If you befriend table 1, you will see the different elements connected to the power types. The act of commanding - a Hard Power-element, as well as the Soft Power act of co-opting (co-option/co-optation) -, are identified as extreme elements in the Soft Power theory. The elements are so extreme that they can not be combined. For instance, if a state, wants another state to adhere to a specific policy - any *commanding* force could make impossible any efforts to create an infrastructure in which the state *co-opts* the policy. This is a prerequisite for the existence of Smart Power. When an actor uses Smart Power, elements for Hard and Soft Power are combined in a way that amplifies the power types.

In the field of International Relations, researchers point to the notion of the EU as a Soft Power actor. Some of the EU’s member states are even part of the world’s most routinized Soft Power actors. The Soft Power trio, trio due to the United Kingdom leaving the EU, consists of France, Germany and Sweden.⁴¹ This theory is of analytical interest as “Europe” has always mirrored itself to “Asia”⁴² and the mirroring has accumulated power. The theory is also relevant in light of the re-coupling (as opposed to decoupling) of EU interest and engagement on the African continent as China entered the continent. This not seldomly in opposition to China entering the continent, demonstrating a tension between the EU (and the West) and China. I hope to conceptualise an understanding of how the EU approaches this geopolitical tension, and where this geopolitical tension clashes with EU’s overall external relations and development policy objectives on the African continent.

As Soft Power Theory emphasises behaviours and resources used as methods, we will articulate this peculiarity in Table 1. Firstly, we have the act of “Commanding” in opposition to “Co-opting”. Secondly, we have “Coercion through Force or Sanctions” in opposition to “Setting the Agenda through the Institutions” within the multilateral system. Thirdly, we have

⁴⁰ Nye S, Joseph. Soft Power - The means to success in world politics, Public Affairs (2004), p. 5. Retrieved: 2021-05/30, 03.57 AM.

⁴¹ The Soft Power 30, A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2019, USC Centre on Public Diplomacy (2019), p. 9. Retrieved: 2021-11/15, 02.43 PM.

⁴² Ambjörnsson, Ronny, Öst och Väst: tankar om Europa och Asien, Atlas Vintage (2011). Retrieved: 2021-11/19, 6.31 PM.

“Inducement through Payment or Bribes”, and this in opposition to simply “Attracting another with your values, culture and policies”.⁴³

⁴⁴ Table 1. Theoretical framework with key concepts in a schema

	Hard Power	Smart Power	Soft Power
Spectrum of Behaviours	Command - Coercion - Inducement	- Coercion - Inducement Agenda Setting - Attraction -	Agenda Setting - Attraction - Co-opt
Most likely Resources	Force Sanctions Payments Bribes	Force Values Payments Institutions Culture Policies Sanctions Bribes	Institutions Values Culture Policies
Geopolitics	EU promotion of FDI.	Promoting military force using Human Rights. (Peacekeeping Missions)	Normative references to “Resource curse”.
Security	EU interest in the energy and infrastructure-sector, China’s Belt and Road Initiative for instance.	Good governance on securitized matters, like the BRIC.	Normative references to triple nexus, sovereignty and governance.
Governance	References to aid and other economic elements as well as overall conditionalities.	Threatening with military interventions on corruption, trying to accumulate support for this within the international system.	Normative references to corruption, multilateralism, democracy and human rights and aid.
Human Rights	Any economic transfers based on conditionalities.	Motivating economic conditionalities, using references to normativeness.	References to EU as a normative actor in Human Rights.

3. Method and material

3.1 Method

In this thesis, I have used the method of text analysis in order to extract data that can give answers to my research questions on the EU's response to China as an emerging actor on the African continent. My objective was to compare the EU response to China as an emerging actor on the African continent, as articulated in the material from 2007 and 2021, and applying the Soft Power theory. This specific method of text analysis is relevant to the study object as the study object is an actor’s ideational “response”, stressing the need for understanding the study object ideationally and comparing the actor’s particular response (i.e policy development) over time.

⁴³ Nye S, Joseph. Soft Power - The means to success in world politics, Public Affairs (2004), p. 5. Retrieved: 2021-03/08, 12.08 PM.

⁴⁴ This table demonstrates how you interpret this schema. The Power types are connected to different types of behaviour and resources when in the usage of the terms: Geopolitics, Security, Governance and Human Rights.

I will now explain what has happened and how I conducted the method. The first thing I did was to identify my material, which consists of the EU-Africa strategies of 2007 and 2021. I was exposed to the material in the European Parliament (I am writing about my positionality below) and it became quickly known to me that there is value in the material that had to be analysed.

The second thing I did was to navigate how the material best could be used. I decided on using keywords in an analytical schema, that served as a lens, to how I interpreted and later operationalized the material. The keywords, Geopolitics, Human Rights, Security and Governance were chosen as those terms are context relevant, in the sense of being prevalent in previous research and in the political debate. While I had pinpointed these keywords ahead of my initial reading of the policy material, I was open to add or change keywords depending on what was thematically relevant for the specific material used. However, it quickly became known that the keywords presented are appropriate terms to understand the material, this for its accurate representation of the material and value in operationalization. What then happened was that after several more readings, I was able to pinpoint more thesis relevant formulations, all of which were connected to the keywords. This was the reason why I conceptualised the keywords as codes, as the formulations in the material indirectly or directly signalled (could be categorized into) the chosen keywords.

The third thing I did was actively structuring (writing done in a systematized way) changes and motivations in the usage of the keywords. I structured the usage of the keywords in the material and compared the strategies of 2007 and 2021. In addition, I did this in relation to the Soft Power theory. Through identifying the usage of the keywords, i.e. the motivations for the usage as well as what each keyword entails (the changes), I in turn sought to connect the keywords to an analysis using the theory and concepts of the Soft Power theory. In concrete, I analysed whether for instance the formulations on Geopolitics amounted to Hard Power, Smart Power or Soft Power and compared the usage between 2007 and 2021.

I chose to conduct this thesis using text analysis for mainly three aspects. The first is that we can decipher the direct and indirect language (or “capturing language”) of the policies over time. The second is that we can also conceptualise the specific context (where the language is given “meaning”) of the EU in time. The third is that we capture power relations that serves as a foundation in not only conceptualising the EU’s Power usage (referring to theory of Soft Power) but also give the understanding of EU’s Power Usage meaning, thus taking on the notion of Power as relational.

I chose this method also in order to conceptualise which power types the EU uses. Text analysis presents the argumentation of an actor as well as the relationship between actors in an eloquent way. A challenge for understanding the EU power usage in its Foreign Policy is choosing the right method that demonstrates the layers that the policy documents expresses directly and indirectly. With the text analysis and accompanied tools like the analytical schema, I was able to analyse both a specific nuance in a specific part as well as all the nuances amounting to the sum. In part this can be done using the method of discourse analysis. However, since the discourse analysis is more suitable for interactive material and analysis on the socio-cultural-political, I early on chose to conduct a text analysis instead. Importantly, I collected my data through extracting any explicit and implicit as well as any direct and indirect notion on the EU’s response to China as an emerging actor on the African continent. I have coded keywords that will be instrumental in the extraction using a controlled

deductive approach. The significant analytical value that could be found in text analysis is not as with quantitative method where you study how often a specific term that is in the coding is mentioned, but rather, why, how and in which context the coding, if ever, is contextualised and motivated. The extraction has been made from the EU-Africa strategies of 2007 and 2021, as the strategies serve as the material in this thesis. The coding is to be viewed as a filter, out of which is filtered, amounts to the policy formulation relevant to the understanding of said problem formulation. Factor in that the coding is subjective and based on the thesis writer former familiarisation with the context, including the research field itself, which the thesis writer hopes to have crystallised in the 'Previous Research'-Section.

I analysed my data through my specified research questions that are interested in understanding the EU power usage within the political landscape of terms from 2007 and 2021. The author believed that there were significant values to be extracted in relation to the research question if this coding was implemented. This due to the previous knowledge of EU Foreign Policy regarding the case of China as an emerging actor on the African continent.

3.2 Material and Sources

For an EU Foreign Policy enthusiast there are plenty of formulations to pinpoint and study. During the Spring of 2021, the new EU-Africa strategy was put out for voting in the European Parliament.⁴⁵ Much of the policy objectives are built on previous work stipulated such as the EU-AU strategy agreed in 2007⁴⁶, the very same year that the EU member states signed the Lisbon Treaty. Together the EU-Africa strategies of 2007 and 2021 will amount to the material studies through the lens of Soft Power theory. The background reason as to why the EU-Africa strategies of 2007 and 2021 served as material is due to the fact that the policy documents are the main documents used by thesis relevant actors on a national and regional level. There are also thematic synergies between the material and the previous research as well as the political landscape in the context of the EU, China and the continent of Africa. These synergies factor into the reasoning behind the usage of the material. An example of a thematic synergy between previous research and the political debate is human rights and trade relations as well as conditions and conditionalities that are central matters in the material. I am sure that the inclusion of the thematic synergies elevated the analysis. In addition, by using the shared policy process of the two strategies, an academic opportunity to conduct a comparative analysis arose. This spoke in favour of using the material.

The material is conceptualised as a roadmap by regional actors such as the EU, which stress its importance. The EU-Africa strategies of 2007 and 2021 are developed with the intention of impacting and setting the framework for future EU policies touching on the same thematic areas as well as the policy development for "land strategies". This influence of the material is argument for using the EU-Africa strategies, as they demonstrate the priorities, interests and power relations on an institutional level. "Land strategies" are the national development plan

⁴⁵ Report, On a New EU-Africa strategy - a partnership for sustainable and inclusive development, [European Parliament](#) (2021-02/11). Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 20.13 PM.

⁴⁶ EU-Africa relations, [European Council and the Council of the European Union \(Consilium\)](#), [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council](#) - From Cairo to Lisbon, The EU-Africa Strategic Partnership (2007-6/27). Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 20.57 PM. [Commission/Council Secretariat Joint Paper](#) - Beyond Lisbon, Making the EU-Africa Strategic Partnership Work (2007-06/27). Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 21.01 PM. [Africa-EU](#) Strategic Partnership - A Joint Africa-EU Strategy, at Africa-EU Summit (2007-12/8-9). Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 21.07 PM.

of a country to another. The EU-Africa strategy therefore play a factor as guiding in land strategies (therefore the budget of development policies) in EU countries to the African continent. This is why it is important to remember that while strategies are discussed between EU and regional and national actors from the African continent, the EU still has formal ownership of the policy process. This as the strategies are jointly presented by the European Commission and the High Representative for the Common and Security Policy. This means that both of the material could be conceptualised as the EU's new framework for "interacting with the African continent", which is suitable as material in this thesis as we are studying EU's political behaviour in its Foreign Policy. According to EU Communication⁴⁷, civil society, EU member states and European Parliament, private sector and think tanks as well African-EU Ministerial Meeting 2020 were all part of the discussion during the policy development.

When navigating in this context it was important to note that the Lisbon Treaty was signed in 2007 enabling the EU to act more united in Foreign Policy. An argument for choosing this material is precisely this timeline in which the strategies were developed, which suggested that one could see differences in how the EU not only responds, but how the EU can respond. This means that the Lisbon Treaty could have given the EU the opportunity to in policy development speak with more unity and/or discuss hard stake politics, as opposed to soft stake politics. This particular change is interesting in relation to China's role and activities on the African continent as much of the centrality is on hard stake politics and played a factor in me choosing the material.

Another aspect in favour of the timeline and thus the usage of this policy material is the trilateral dialogue between China, the African continent and the EU. After the first EU-Africa strategy that was agreed upon in 2007, the trilateral dialogue was developed. The question of if and how an EU response to China's activities could be conceptualised, developed. There was a plan to use this document as an addition to the EU-Africa strategies used. However, given the thematic span and timeline of the thesis, I had to prioritize my time. The trilateral dialogue was inspirational in the development of my specified research and problem formulation. The trilateral dialogue, previous research and the political debate, indicated a pre and post-China, suggesting a changed EU response to the case of China on the African continent.⁴⁸

In addition, the Cotonou Agreements in 2000⁴⁹ between the AVS-states (Organisations for African, West Indies and Pacific Island-states) and the EU are thematically relevant and could have been used. Since the policy document is from 2000, there would be a risk of analysing the wrong timeline. The Cotonou Agreements also look at broader actors. Note however that two African regional strategies are based on the Cotonou Agreement, the first to the Horn of Africa and second to the Sahel Region. Although of analytical value, this material is not time relevant and too specific given the scope of the thesis. They also lack a comparative document which makes it harder to see changes in time, which is the very foundation of the specified research questions. In conclusion, I could have used other documents or pursued the direction

⁴⁷ Comision Europea, Preguntas y respuestas: Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa. (2020-03/09). Retrieved: 2022-07/08 11.32 AM.

⁴⁸ [Communication from the Commission](#) to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions: The EU, Africa and China: Towards trilateral dialogue and cooperation (2008-10/17). Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 21.12 PM.

⁴⁹ EU-Africa relations, [European Council and the Council of the European Union \(Consilium\)](#).

of analysing speeches using the discourse analysis. However for all of the reasons above I believed that this was the most fruitful direction to head to.

3.3 Ethics and Positionality

Given that the research matter involves no humans in the sense that only policy formulations were studied, no risks were found that directly affect humans. However, words can damage if its sweeping generalisations on states actions, that in turn can affect the humans behind the states. To the best of my ability, I have tried to understand a complex, tangled subject, that really should be a PHD.

When the EU-Africa strategy of 2021 was voted upon in the European Parliament, I was working in a Member of Parliament's Office and had to take a political stance on the strategy. I also have a political background, some of it is activism, in which I have protested against the Government of China for Human Rights Violations. I have protested against other governments and in my day-to-day job, I work in an international setting, closely to international organisations, which is of value when understanding my positionality.

4. Results and Discussion

Central within both of the EU-Africa strategies is the conceptualisation of the EU as a normative actor. Direct and indirect, as well as explicit and implicit expressions of normativity were found. Normativeness is demonstrated in the policy formulations of the EU-Africa strategies. This through the usage of Soft Power – all of the power types are showcased in different intensities.

In the EU-Africa strategy of 2007, Soft Power is leading as a power type whereas Smart Power is the main force underpinning the EU-Africa strategy of 2021. In this sense attraction through culture, values and policies in combination with agenda-setting through institutions and partnerships within these institutions are pinpointed. Hard Power is present, but only in the direct sense of aid and debt. Aid and debt falls under the Inducement in the sense of economic transactions, for instance payments or bribes. Perhaps it is no surprise that Smart Power as a power type is not conceptualised in the EU-Africa strategy of 2007. The 2007 was in the early stages of the EU-Africa framework. Clear and direct communication as opposed to the mixed methods (thus mixed communication of Smart Power) could therefore have been purposefully avoided. Today we see a new external, challenging political landscape as well as a renewed, internal, infrastructure within the EU. This could affect and raise the stakes for the usage of Smart Power on policy formulations within joint strategies and partnerships which could serve as a reason for the increased usage of Smart Power.

Pertaining when using Soft Power in the 2007 EU-Africa strategy is the non-confrontative approach, but rather collaborative approach to China as an emerging actor on the African continent. China was in fact not even conceptualised directly and neither as a sole actor in the EU-Africa strategy of 2007. In addition, adding to the dimensions of the “collaborative spirit” of the 2007 policy formulations, is the EU promotion of South-South trade and integration, not only as an instrument to North-South integration but rather as instrincal in itself.

It is worth adding that China has in the last decade accelerated its role on the African continent, and it is more of a common understanding that China's role on the African

continent is more defined in 2022, than in 2007. This results in perhaps a stronger need for policy formulations on the matter. As China's role is more defined, the EU can more easily form its role, or vice versa. Though as with most political processes, actors on the world's scenes are in a multidimensional symbiosis, everlastingly shaped and shapers of one another. Reiterating the collaborative spirit of the EU-Africa strategy of 2007, we will proceed with the thematic fields.

Geopolitics

While the element of direct geopolitics is not present in the EU-Africa strategy of 2007, it is the basis for the EU-Africa strategy of 2021. In no way is there a formulation of power competition between Western actors like the EU with China in the 2007th strategy. There are several aspects to possibly factorise as to why geopolitics is now the main focus in EU-Africa relations. One aspect to take into account is that EU-Africa relations was, in 2007, entering a new stage. EU and European states were formally departing from a paternalistic and colonial relations and power dynamics to several African states and institutions (decoupling from the African continent). This could serve as a factor for not including references to geopolitics on China's engagement to the Africa continent.

In addition, China's presence was not brand new in 2007 but the way in which China's acts is still novel both on the African continent and in global politics. It is only in recent times where the EU has accelerated its Energy Diplomacy specifically in relation to Russia. In turn, this could have sped up talks on geopolitics to overall BRICS countries. This in a way that was not a political reality in 2007. China-US and Australian-China trade relations, both of which, among other aspects, affect the global and bilateral economic infrastructure, could have been a factor as to why the EU-Africa relations amount to a geopolitical partnership. The increase of the geopolitical elements and geopolitics as a political reality are in line with the overall discourses within international relations specifically targeting EU-Africa-China relations.

Of interest, however, is that apart from direct references to geopolitics first being articulated in the EU-Africa strategies of 2021, there was a political basis for references to geopolitics in 2007. Why the EU still chose to articulate a Rousseau-oriented (friendly, collaborative) strategy is of analytical value. In addition, while no clear references to geopolitics are made in 2007, a tension, built on fragments of geopolitics, still set the undertone for the 2007th EU-Africa strategy. In no way is this the same, this as the EU-Africa strategy 2021 was articulated as a response to this geopolitical tension. However one can say that geopolitical aspects are elements, this to various degrees, in the different strategies and the development of the political, diplomatic, relations between the actors. This is because, when China is conceptualised even in the strategy of 2007 - it is as the political other. Indeed, the political other could be a "partner" or "competitor", however still a political other.

Security

Deeply connected to geopolitics and geopolitical tensions is security. While security is present as a political discourse in the EU-Africa strategy of 2007, China's interests - is only conceptualised as a security threat and a detrimental actor in opposition to said European Security and African Sovereignty - in the EU-Africa strategy of 2021. In the 2007th formulations it was stated that the aim of Energy Security was to include emerging donors to the energy partnership. Following policy formulation on Energy is demonstrative of in which way the actor seeks a collaborative political landscape. This by taking the lead in

agenda-setting in institutions as well as through attraction in policies. I would want to reiterate (governmental/state) security to geopolitics as is demonstrated here:

“To this end, the partners have agreed to establish the Africa-EU Energy Partnership, which will address the joint challenges of energy security and diversification of supply, access to affordable, clean and efficient energy services, new and renewable energy resources and climate change. Partners will furthermore aim at building capacity, at mobilising increased investments for energy infrastructure in Africa, including through the existing EU Energy Facility and other financial instruments, and at including emerging donors in the dialogue on sustainable energy sector development in Africa.”

This policy formulation when analysed would then suggest that in EU’s eyes, China’s positionality within the field of energy sector development in Africa was not conceptualised as a direct political threat, nor a political opportunity. At this stage and solely using this policy formulation it is impossible to say whether there is any political diversification on EU policies when looking at China’s energy sector role on specific African states. Perhaps the policy formulation of the need to aim to include China was articulated. At the very least, aforementioned policy formulation suggests that China’s role within the African energy sector was a political reality to take into account.

As with the case of geopolitics, stating that security aspects are central in the development of states and different actors' priorities and interests, would be a truism. With that, security as an aspect is always present. Yet as stipulated, it is only in the latter strategy, the EU-Africa strategy of 2021, that China’s interests are acknowledged and conceptualised as in complete opposition to EU interest. The political playfield on security has therefore changed. If we recall that China was conceptualised as emerging and as a partner (in the security scene - on energy politics), in the EU-Africa strategy of 2007, this element is almost completely gone in the EU-Africa strategy of 2021. China as a Security partner is gone in all ways but within UN Peacekeeping Missions. What is highly present in the field of security is the element of the EU as a normative actor. To a high degree, the EU is characterised as a good security governance actor, which is in line with the conceptualisation of a geopolitical partnership.

Governance

As with the case of the EU as a good security governance actor, good governance in any field seems like an accumulative power element. This is then used as a motivator to attract or give another actor more influence. The following policy formulation is demonstrative of the point laid forward in that good governance is power to collect or accumulate:

“calls for the EU to coordinate with each country truly interested in a prosperous and positive long-term development of the African continent, on the basis of the full respect of human rights, media freedom and accountability, transparent and responsive governance and the fight against corruption, which are vital elements for ensuring a stable and inclusive political, social and economic environment in Africa;”

Here, we ought to reiterate how the political reality of good governance is used as a way of attracting and accumulating influence through values and policies, a Soft Power act. The second articulation to note is the tonality of “././ with each country truly interested ././” and phrases with similar meaning which is a new EU-language serving to demonstrate (EU, political) genuineness/good intentions in the EU-Africa strategy of 2021. This is interesting in

relation to governance due to the articulation of good governance as an act i.e political capacity that could attract influence as well as an intention deeply linked to political identity (which in turn could be connected to Identity Formation through Non-Identity Formation).

Of particular value is the linkage of good governance to aid. For instance references to the reduction of corruption and illicit flows of money are clear demonstrations of the linkage between governance and aid. Several formulations of this essence are laid for all throughout the strategies. If geopolitics is the new element, changing the political infrastructure between the actors (governance) in all its diversity, is the common, red thread in the strategies. However, a crucial point to make is that governance is only directly stated in the EU-Africa strategy of 2021. In the EU-Africa strategy of 2007, governance is highly indirectly encompassed through references to institutions and the “collaborative spirit” within different institutional foras. If we recall that China has a history of challenging the multilateral system from the outside, this 2007th reference to encouraging partnerships within the institutions could be a response to yesterday's China.

Human Rights

If we also recall that China is in opposition of Universal definitions on Human Rights, as articulated in the Introduction, viewing the motivations and changes on Human Rights is of particular interest. A direct mention of Human Rights is not made in the EU-Africa strategy of 2007, only the latter strategy from 2021. When Human Rights is conceptualised it is in connection to governance, and the governance of “Human Rights”. Given that much of the research of EU-Africa-China pinpoints “Human Rights” as a central aspect, with an emphasis on diverging policies among the actors, the intensity of in which Human Rights is conceptualised do not demonstrate this fully. There are no direct mentions of Human Rights in the EU-Africa strategy of 2007, yet plenty of formulations clearly encompassing the term Human Rights in the EU-Africa strategy of 2021 are located. They are hereby exemplified by the references to Policy Coherence and to some degree goal conflicts that are highly present. I say this because I have made the observation in this thesis that Policy Coherence and (the reduction) of goal conflicts in EU-Africa relations seems like a code for Human Rights.

With that said it is suitable to head on to the EU-Africa strategy of 2021 in which Smart Power takes on the lead. Overall, China is conceptualised directly and indirectly, as well as explicitly and implicitly. Central to the EU-Africa strategy of 2021 and within the usage of Smart Power, is the plenty of references to and the dismissal of “The China Alternative ” as well as China’s active participation in “Africa’s resource curse” through the Russia-shared role of exploiters.

As following formulation is telling, we cite the initiating words of the EU-Africa strategy of 2021 that:

“././ underlines that the EU at its core, in its political and economic relations with third countries, is motivated by advancing fundamental rights, providing support to democratic institutions and upholding democratic accountability; believes that third countries, such as China, are pursuing other objectives that are, sometimes, of concern to us; stresses that our objective is to strengthen the resilience and independence of our African partners; expresses its regret, therefore, that the actions of other players, especially China and Russia, are advancing their geopolitical interests and are focused on a growing unilateralism, and stresses

that their own benefits are at the expense of the sovereignty of African countries and European security;”

clearly demonstrating a continuation of EU’s role as a normative actor, with an added articulation, perhaps even an acknowledgement, of an existing geopolitical dimension and clash between EU and China Policy on the African continent. This as opposed to the collaborative approach localised in the EU-Africa strategy of 2007. Once again, we can also in clear articulation see a demonstration of this Identity Formation through Non Identification. The key takeaway ought to be that the EU-Africa strategy of 2021 not only centralises Smart Power but also that the essence is packaged in a new tonality. While Soft Power is prevalent, Hard Power picks up its speed and instrument, adding also Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to the political potion. For a trained eye, China is a key FDI actor on the African continent and has accelerated its FDI stocks and ratio, meaning that the EU could in fact be responding to precisely this political reality through the promotion of EU FDI.

If we proceed to the motivation of the different power types in the EU-Africa strategies, we can see that the geopolitical dimension so clearly prevalent in the 2021 strategy is lacking in the strategy of 2007. Although Policy Coherence and goal conflicts in the triple nexus in particular within the field of trade and development policy, is conceptualised in the EU-Africa strategy of 2007 - it is more prevalent in the EU-Africa strategy of 2021. Reiterating the novel incentive of geopolitics, we can see swift changes in terms regarding the conceptualisation of China. Initially we saw terms like partner, especially on trade, but in the recent strategy we see that the term < partner >, that signals a friendly, Rousseau-approach, is replaced by the term < player >, an opposing, competitive, Lockean-approach. Even terms like < power competition >, i.e Cold War-rhetoric's is prevalent, which is pertaining in political landscapes where geopolitics is a motivating factor for actors.

In conclusion, the EU-Africa strategy of 2021, is motivated by geopolitical tension and hard stake politics. This in relation, perhaps not in complete opposition, to the EU-Africa strategy of 2007, where low stake politics are conceptualised. In fact, if we compare the different strategies with the aim of navigating clear policy articulations, we quickly localise that within the EU-Africa strategy of 2007, almost all policy formulation fall under Soft Power, is normative and not thematically eclectic. Policy Coherence, South-South Cooperation and promotion of values, with occasional, yet important, mentions of Hard Power, as in with aid and debt, is not only what the strategy consists of, but also what the strategy is motivated by.

However, when eyeing the EU-Africa strategy of 2021, we quickly note that it is thematically more eclectic. In a cocktail of Soft, Smart and Hard Power we find constituents, instruments in need for a geopolitical partnership and references to power competition, promotion of South-South Integration, economic investments and trade integration, resource curse and “The China Alternative”, normativeness (Soft Power) on Hard Power matters such military (Peacekeeping Missions), aid and last but not least the promotion of EU FDI. All of these aspects serve as motivators, for the change between the EU usage and ratio between Soft, Smart and Hard Power, in the different material.

Overall, and while the changes in the power usage between the different strategies is prevalent and clear, as demonstrated above, the contextual backbone of the strategies are not new. See for instance, that the geopolitical tensions between China and the EU are not novel in time. However, what has changed is the EU response to the geopolitical tensions and “clashing roles” of the EU and China on the African continent. Scrambles of the causes for this changed

power usage, could be found in the initiating words in the EU-Africa strategy of 2021, cited on page 13 in this thesis. The cited policy formulation not only conceptualises China (and Russia's) geopolitical interests, and EU as the novel good, normative actor in this, but rather also China's threats to multilateralism (i.e the global world order). In addition, also < African sovereignty >, the point in this case though being the emphasis on < European Security >.

If we reiterate the notions on spheres of influence as well as China leaving the former role of an outsider within the international framework to its now, redefined role, as a so-called "challenger" to the international framework and norms. The norms that theoretically, and to a higher degree (than any time in history) practically, upholds the system (i.e Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law) - we can from this see that the power usage is in addition driven 1. as a response to this new global political landscape and 2. in defence of the European and EU sphere of influence. This is interesting because it could be argued that normativity is usually motivated by external objectives. However, in this we also see internal objectives, out of which both sides within the strategies framework can strengthen one another. In conclusion, we can note the arrival of the win-win rhetoric and start to prepare for the departure of the donor-recipient, or the active-passive role.

This thesis seeks to understand the EU response to China as an emerging actor on the African continent through analysing the EU-Africa strategies of 2007 and 2021. We can say that while the EU-Africa strategy of 2007 was "the pacemaker" of EU-Africa relations, the EU-Africa strategy of 2021 was a response to China's new, leading role on the African continent. In EU's eyes China has gone from not even being directly encompassed or at its extreme 'emerging' in its actorness, to now being a detrimental, established actor on the African continent. What happened in between - and why - is a case for another thesis.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Reflection on Problem Formulation

Since this thesis studies how the EU acts in relation to China as a new actor on the African continent, it is important to remember that EU-China disputes on the African continent mirror the global scene to a various degree. Acknowledging a normative dimension to power can help us understand the EU's role in international relations. The EU is seeking to influence the field of Human Rights, Geopolitics, Democracy and Governance in various ways, as a normative power. This as a response to China as a *changed* (perhaps more for being a "*changer*") actor on the African continent. Normative power, is as we have previously stipulated an actor's ability to through the usage of accumulated influence for their < ideas > and define what is normal and what is not. This means, aspiring to set an ideational discourse on which political behaviour and thinking is legitimate, this with normative implication on individual lifestyles and societal governance. Ideas conceptualised by a normative actor, is a political instrument where power and the actors sphere of influence can be extended. Normative power and the notion of ideational discourses as instrumental to states is not new, yet of particular value (read: content) in relation to the concept of sphere of influence.

In terms of global governance, China has accumulated influence and strategic geopolitical infrastructure points on the African continent through political influence and support that has enabled China to change its global positionality. The EU response, i.e usage of Smart and Soft Power, ought to be understood from this point of view. The struggles for multilateralism and

respect for international norms and values, the very catalysator and incentives for international collaboration sharing solutions for shared problems, requires an expectation that the other will respect the form in which international relations are conducted. This includes shared norms on how institutions and of particular value in the EU-Africa-China context are shared norms on conditionalities and conditions on for instance aid and trade relations. Not only is the landscape on the diversification of shared norms of analytical value. How actors motivate policies is of interesting value too. In clear language, a state's Foreign Policy and whether the actor is "turn inward" or "turn outward first" is important in states policy development. It is even so the very foundation of social progressivity and is a measure in how leaned in an actor is towards international collaboration.

EU engagement on the African continent in modern times is usually formulated as the EU turning outwards for others. Recent developments demonstrate that the EU is increasingly linking together national interests with external interests. One clear example of this is that European Security and African Sovereignty is, according to the EU, upheld together. With Smart Power and Soft Power such a diffusion and parallel, linked interests, are possible.

I suggest the following points that can help us understand the EU response to China's activities on the African continent:

1. With the use of Smart and Soft Power, the EU is not acting with national interest solely. At least two things occur within this field: 1. The EU is aiming to create a common identification with the African continent and 2. The EU can act selflessly until and as long as - the other actors do not go against the EU's own interests. In order to narrate this, Smart and Soft Power are seen as better equipped than the militaristic approach.
2. With the use of Smart and Soft Power and while the political landscape is heavily more geopolitical, EU-China is not "arming" up in ideational discourse, in its "thoughts". It is still so that diplomatic relations are seen as the best platform for solving political crises, and this even so, EU policy increasingly covers the geopolitical dimension of China on the African continent.
3. While EU actorness is the most central actorness regarding China's role on the African continent, we can not view it as something isolated from other actors in this context. This probably serves as the main factor as to why the EU behaviour can be understood through using Soft Power and Smart Power. While more geopolitical, which would typically put forward a more state centred, militaristic approach - the landscape of a variety of complex actors and EU's normativeness on its benchmarks speaks in favour of the long road. In conclusion, Soft Power and Smart Power are used, not seldomly on geopolitically coded aspects, which is not so typical.

5.2 Reflection of Result

The most central aspect (see Table 1), which is not only a new emphasis but rather a novel tonality, is the usage of the term < geopolitical partnership > between the EU and African countries as well as institutions. The language and the references to the geopolitical partnership as well as the geopolitical dimensions, and conceptualisation of China as a resource exploiter, is without doubt agenda setting in rhetoric and stresses that all institutions - national and regional - ought to contribute to the fulfilment of said partnership.

In this study, it has been noted that geopolitics falls under Soft Power and following formulations serve as the argumentation for why: The geopolitical dimensions and the references to exploitation, resource curse and a “New Scramble For Africa” falls within the line of attraction through the EU’s “Identity Creation as a result of the Non Identification”, with China’s action. This is conducted with the help of the framing, and existing reality of the EU as a normative actor in which good (social and economic) governance is stressed and emphasis is put on human rights related aspects. This through articulations on Policy Coherence, (the limitation, acknowledgement and the light condemnation of) goal conflicts and the reduction of conditionalities - on aid and debt and other kinds of economic transfers like Foreign Direct Investments. This directly as a response to China’s non existing EU-like conditionalities, and existence of conditions on political and diplomatic support for the “One China-Policy”. The Agenda Setting as well as the Attraction related instruments in the EU-Africa strategies, i.e the material that was analysed in this thesis, falls under the category of Soft Power. The Soft Power Instruments have changed in intensity, between 2007 and 2021, but are key elements in both the strategies. A crucial aspect for understanding this train of thought is that when actors formulate and conduct Identity Formation, a goal and the result could be a political act of attracting and accumulating influence. This so that when actors formulate and narrative themselves as normative actors on for instance Human Rights, the formulation itself is an act of attraction. Overall, this is the case for Human Rights, that amount to Soft and Smart Power in the EU-Africa relations.

On Security that is deeply linked to geopolitics, we can see that Soft Power and Smart Power are used as an instrument. Due to the fact that Security (in both its conceptual definitions of 1. being a situation as well as 2. something to accumulate) amounts to a timeless political reality to take into consideration, it is no surprise that actors have used Soft Power and Smart Power in the political playfield of Security. However, the collaborative spirit, consequently linked to the institutional attraction and the partnership creation of Soft and Smart Power, is being replaced with attraction in values, also pertaining in Soft and Smart Power. To speak in clear terms, within the field of security in EU-Africa relations Soft and Smart is still the political go to. However, changes are being made in the different tools used within Soft and Smart Power.

We can identify Hard Power in the material analysed, most of it are on various types of (economic, good) governance. Aspects related to Inducement are central and very much more emphasised in the EU-Africa strategy of 2021. The Instruments of Inducement are all the aspects related to debt, aid, economic transfers as well as conditionalities that are directly linked to references on governance. I would not say that the changes made in policy formulations in the different material, for instance the limitation of debt, is a bribe. Conversely, that the EU is “paying its way to influence on the African continent” but debt, aid, economic transfers and conditionalities all do fall under Inducement, which is part of Hard Power.

As both Soft and Hard Power are pertaining, albeit on different matters, we can articulate the notion that the material combined is an attempt or a product of the combination of Hard and Soft Power. This in a way that an amplification of the both are made, i.e Smart Power. There is no Commanding and Coercion that falls under Hard Power as well as no form of Soft Power Co-opting in the analysed material. This could be due to the fact that the usage of the extremes obviates the required balance of Smart Power.

5.3 Theoretical Implications

For all of these reasons combined, the results are in line with the previous research. When it comes to the thesis results in relation to previous research there are two main points of connectivity. The first connection to be made in relation to previous research is that all policy formulations its policy stance as well as the argumentation for the policy stance have been studied. For instance, economic relations between the actors, this in all its diversity, continues to be a research matter even to this day. This research on economic relations is rarely left without the contextualisation of governance of some sort and China as an emerging/established actor on the African continent, either deemed as a collaborator or even more so an enemy.

Serving as second point of connectivity is that underpinning the both of the EU-Africa strategies is the Identity Creation through the Non Identity Identification. This is not surprising as EU and member states have together with the Soft Power trademark, also marked Identity Creation through the Non Identity Identification. As we know, that means this thesis was in line with the theory of Aggestam. If we recall the concept of Identity Formation through the Non Identity Identification, we quickly see that the aspects with centrality in this discussion is the following:

EU Foreign Policy seems to be linked to European National Identity. EU Foreign Policy also seems to be linked to the EU in relation to China. In addition, if the EU sphere of influence is important for policy development then this is where analysis of EU Foreign Policy must begin. There is a lot to say but the beginning of not only understanding the EU various spheres of influence is the Identity Formations, as stipulated through EU values i.e the benchmarks of Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law. It is this identity - of values - that was referenced to in various ways in the EU-Africa strategy and which reiterates the picture of Identity formation as a function of Non Identity Formation. By this, also nodding to a central aspect to power as an object, its relationality.

In its relationality it is crucial to note once again Manners word on:

“The concept of normative power is an attempt to suggest 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.”

The EU is not only normative within its own sphere, internally in its own political think tank, but also in its relation to other actors and the international system. Perhaps because the normative basis is so foundational in EU policy and identity, this generates the political capital needed to use Smart Power and Soft Power in the way that the EU is currently conducting Foreign Policy. Since Smart and Soft Power are normative, this has a theoretical implication that not only is there a dimension of Identity Creation through Non-Identification within EU Foreign Policy, but rather that this Identity Creation is inherently normative. This suggests that the very core of EU Identity Formation is not solely the content of the benchmarks. The core then being built of elements of the form of the benchmarks and its implications for EU policy behavior and action. The EU behaves normatively, because the EU thinks that the EU is normative. With regards to theoretical implications, it also seems to be that there is a link between Manners on EU as a normative power and Aggestam on role identity. This in the sense that the EU is internal and its sphere of influence, is being externalised.

When continuing on power we can say that the theoretical implication of the power types: Hard Power, Smart Power and Soft Power, when taking into account that all power types are present, is that they will stay relevant even in a highly geopolitical landscape. Some more than others, of course, but indeed what can be said regarding the theoretical implication is that it is confirmed the power types and context for the Soft Power theory are pertaining and can not be debunked. As previously showcased, the power types change as well as the motivation for the usage of different power types stay volatile, this partially for geopolitical aspects. It is Soft Power and Smart that are used, yet they are on traditionally Hard Power geopolitical terrain.

5.3 Future Research

Through this thesis I have continued to learn some aspects of the EU way of thinking and with which filter the EU relates to the world and in which way the EU positions itself within the international system. This has been in relation to China and the African continent which has provided some insight on the matter. For broader understanding on the EU's role in the global political landscape, more research studying normative power ought to be made.

Since we can see that China and Russia are jointly conceptualised in the policy formulations analysed above, there is a pertaining relevancy of conducting a similar analysis on Russia, India and other emerging economies, in particular the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). With Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the 22nd of February, a thesis in this direction gains relevancy. I would suggest a longer timeline as the scope is wide and complex. A suggestion is expanding the material to media communication. I would also suggest more research using different theories and/or concepts of power. A relevant lesson from the thesis is that relations are best understood when understanding the relational dynamics and the non-captured language in formal institutional language.

Geopolitics and the discourses on global governance in relation to the EU, the African continent and China are broad research areas requiring deep research. The usage of the Soft Power theory proved to be a challenge, yet also a useful opportunity for future research formulations with similar layout in content and in format.

References

Africa-EU International trade in good statistics, [Eurostat](#), European Union (2021-04-29). Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 3.11 PM.

[Africa-EU Strategic Partnership - A Joint Africa-EU Strategy](#), at Africa-EU Summit (2007-12/8-9). Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 21.07 PM.

Aggestam, Lisbeth, *Role Identity and the Europeanisation of Foreign Policy: A Politico-Cultural Approach: Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*, Manchester University Press (2018), p. 3. Retrieved: 2021-11/18, 17.20 PM.

Ambjörnsson, Ronny, *Öst och Väst: tankar om Europa och Asien*, Atlas Vintage (2011). Retrieved: 2021-11/19, 6.31 PM.

Bache, Ian. Bulmer, Simon. George, Stephen. Parker, Owen. *Politics in the European Union*. (5th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press (2020) Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 2.47 PM.

Berkes, Fikret. Kislalioglu, Mina. Folke, Carl. Gadgil, Madhav, *Exploring Basic Ecological Unit: Ecosystem-Like Concepts in Traditional Societies*, 1.5 Ecosystem, Springer. (1998).

Bodomo, Adams, *Africa-China-Europe relations: Conditions and Conditionalities*, Journal of International Studies (2009), p. 123. Retrieved: 2021/11-18, 10.20. AM.

[Commission/Council Secretariat Joint Paper](#) - Beyond Lisbon, Making the EU-Africa Strategic Partnership Work (2007-06/27). Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 21.01 PM.

Carbone, Maurizio. *The European Union and China's Rise in Africa: Competing visions, external coherence and trilateral cooperation*. Journal of Contemporary African Studies, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group (2011), p. 203. Retrieved: 2021-12/15. 5.27 PM.

Chan, Gérald, *China and global governance - Evolving Approaches in Chinese Foreign Policy under Xi*, edited by: Boon, Tiang Hoo, Politics in Asia Series, Routledge (2017), p. 163-164. Retrieved: 2021-11/19, 6.00 PM.

China-EU International trade in good statistics, [Eurostat](#), European Union (2021-03-21). Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 2.47 PM.

[Communication from the Commission](#) to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions: The EU, Africa and China: Towards trilateral dialogue and cooperation (2008-10/17). Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 21.12 PM.

Comision Europea, Preguntas y respuestas: Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa. (2020-03/09). Retrieved: 2022-07/08 11.32 AM.

Ebner, Julia, "The Sino-European race for Africa's minerals: When two quarrel a third rejoices", Resources Policy 43 (2015), p. 112. Retrieved: 2021-11/15, 02.14 PM.

EU-Africa relations, [European Council and the Council of the European Union \(Consilium\)](#). [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council](#) - From Cairo to Lisbon, The EU-Africa Strategic Partnership (2007-6/27). Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 20.57 PM.

Foreign and Security Policy, [EUR-Lex](#), Access to European Union Law. Retrieved: 2021-11/13, 06.06 PM.

George T, Yu, China, Africa and Globalisation: The China Alternative. [Institute for Security and Development Policy](#) (2009), p. 9. Retrieved: 2021/11-18, 10.05 AM.

Goldstein, Avery, “A Rising China’s Growing Presence” in “China’s Global Engagement - Cooperation, competition and influence in the 21th Century ”, edited by deLisle Jacques, Goldstein, Avery, Brookings Institution Press (2017), p. 20. Retrieved: 2021/11-19, 5.44 PM.

Grimm Sven, Hackensch, “China in Africa: What challenges for a reforming European Union Development Policy? Illustrations from country cases”, *Development Policy Review*, (2017), p. 556. Retrieved: 2021-11/18, 11.01 AM.

Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on strengthening the EU’s contribution to rules-based multilateralism, [EUR-Lex](#), High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, European Commission (2021-02/17) JOIN (2021) 3 Final, p. 1. Retrieved: 2021-11/15, 02.56 PM.

Kluth, Michael, “The European Union and Sub-Saharan Africa - from intervention towards deterrence”, *African Security Review* (22.1), Institute for Security Studies (2013), p. 22. Retrieved: 2021-11/18, 10.38 AM.

Leroy, Marcel. Africa and the EU: Perspectives and Prospects. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2009), p.3. Retrieved: 2021-12/15. 7.41 PM.

Manners, Ian. Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms, *JCMS* (40,2), pp. 235-258, (2002), p. 242. Retrieved: 2021/11-19. 2.20 PM.

Mayring, P. (2000) Qualitative content analysis. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 2: 1-28. Available on-line: <http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/2-00/2-00mayring-e.htm>, p. 4-5. Retrieved 2022-05/29.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Linde, Ann, 2019-, Government of Sweden’s Foreign Policy Declaration of 2021, [Regeringen](#) (2021). Retrieved: 2021-11/19. 12.22. PM.

Niemann, Arne, Huigens, Judith, The European Union’s role in the G8: a principal-agent perspective, *Journal of European Public Policy* (2011), p. 430. Retrieved: 2021/11-19, 11.34 AM.

Nye S, Joseph. Soft Power - The means to success in world politics, *Public Affairs* (2004). Retrieved: 2021-11/19, 6.23 PM.

Policies framing AU-EU Cooperation, [European Commission](#). Retrieved: 2021-07-09, 00.54 AM

Qingjiang Kong Mindu “Is the ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative the Chinese Vision of Global Governance? in Martinico, Giuseppe, Wu Xueyam’s A Legal Analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative - Towards a New Silk Road (2020), p. 19.

Report, On a New EU-Africa strategy - a partnership for sustainable and inclusive development, [European Parliament](#) (2021-02/11). Retrieved: 2021-11/17, 20.13 PM.

Stahl, Anna Katharina. [Contrasting Rhetoric and Converging Security Interests of the European Union and China in Africa](#). *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* (40, 4), pp. 147-173 (2011), p. 148. Retrieved: 2021/12-15. 12-04 PM.

Serban, D Ilena, Agency and Governance in European Union International Development, *Third World Quarterly* (2021), p. 13-14. Retrieved: 2021/11-18, 17.48 PM.

Steger B, Manfred, *Globalisation - A very short introduction*, Oxford University Press (2017), p. 38. Retrieved: 2021/11-18, 08.45 AM.

The Soft Power 30, A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2019, USC Centre on Public Diplomacy (2019), p. 9. Retrieved: 2021-11/15, 02.43 PM.

Thomas C, Daniel, *Making EU Foreign Policy: National Preferences, European Norms and Common Policies*, Palgrave MacMillian UK (2011), p. 14-15. Retrieved: 2021-11/19, 11.49 AM.

Youngs, Richard, "The European Union and Global Politics", *The European Union Series* (1), (2021), p. 24. Retrieved: 2021/11-18, 14.29 PM.

Zhao Quansheng: *Changes and Continuities in Chinese Foreign Policy and Policymaking: Global Perspectives on Foreign Policy of Major Powers*, Academic Foundation (2016), p. 113. Retrieved: 2021-11/19, 16.36 PM.