

The EU – a normative actor?

*A study of the EU's foreign policy towards
China (2005 to 2009)*

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Abstract

In this thesis I have analysed policy discourses and policy practices of the EU towards China in the period of 2005-2009. I have examined to what extent the policy discourses and policy practices were normative in character, and whether there was a consistency between normative commitments and normative practices. Theories on the EU as a normative actor were applied in the analysis.

Two main discourses were identified in the EU throughout the period. The first, the ‘partnership’ discourse, centred on interest-based goals. The latter, ‘norm concerning’ discourse, centred on normative goals. The non-normative ‘partnership’ discourses dominated in the period, with the year 2008 as an exception. In 2008, norm concerns were widely and strongly expressed within the EU.

The analysis of practices showed that when the ‘partnership’ discourses dominated, the policy tools were applied mainly to promote interest-based goals. When the ‘norm concerning’ discourse dominated in 2008, the practice also changed, as the EU in this period increasingly promoted norms, both in dialogues and through public statements and condemnations. Even though the potential for norm promotion was larger in the practice, the EU was still close to being a consistent normative actor.

In 2009 a change was again seen, when the ‘partnership’ discourse increasingly was represented in EU, and the EU primarily focused on seeking economic goals in practice. The economic and financial crisis in Europe was used to legitimise the promotion of a strong economic beneficial partnership with China. In sum, there was a high degree of consistency between the dominating discourse and the main practices. Yet the EU was mainly not a normative actor, foremost seeking interest-based goals.

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List of Abbreviations

- CFSP – Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP – Common Security and Defence Policy
CSP - Country Strategy Paper
EC – European Community
ECHR – European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
EFP – EU foreign policy
EU – European Union
FPA – Foreign policy analysis
GHG – Greenhouse Gas
HED –High Level Economic Trade Dialogue
HR – High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
HRD – Human Rights Dialogue
ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IR – International Relations
IPR – Intellectual Property Rights
MEP – Member of the European Parliament
MIP – Multiannual Indicative Programme
MoU – Memorandum of Understanding
NIP – National Indicative Programme
NPE – Normative Power Europe
PCA – Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PCFA – Partnership and Cooperation Framework Agreement
RTL –Re-education Through Labour
TEU – Treaty on European Union
UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN – United Nations
US – United States
WMD – Weapon of Mass Destruction
WTO – World Trade Organisation

1 Introduction

In recent years, the EU has gained a growing acceptance as an important and relevant actor on the world stage. The EU is a major trade actor in the world and “(...) trade provides the foundations of its actorness” (Bretherton and Vogler 2006:62). But the EU’s global political powers have also been highlighted. With the establishment of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 1993, several treaty reforms and the recent ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU's foreign policy capabilities have increased. The EU has also explicitly promoted itself as a global actor. The external political and economical agenda is evident in the European Security Strategy from 2003 (European Council 2003) and in the Treaty of Lisbon (2007). Moravcsik (2009; 2010) and McCormick (2007) go as far as to define the EU as a superpower. Moravcsik (2010:152) argues that the EU, besides the US, is the only region “(...) that exert global influence across the full spectrum from hard to soft power”.

The subject of this thesis is the EU’s foreign policy towards China. Over the past couple of years, the two have developed a stronger political relationship. While the European countries have deepened their bilateral links with China, the EU collectively has also increased its engagement with China, and has developed and implemented broader strategies for cooperation in many sectors (Shambaugh 2004:243). Diplomatic relations were first established between the EC and China in 1975, and the further development of bilateral bonds was slow. The first important agreements made between the two concerned trade and economic cooperation (Men 2007:2). Since the end of the Cold War, however, the political dialogues and cooperation in several sectors have increased, and “(...) the EU’s growing relationship to China has proven a ripe testing ground for the EU’s attempts to emerge as a significant international actor” (Haydon 2011:2). The international financial crisis in 2008 put the EU-China relationship on the agenda. The crisis severely affected the European economy and the EU was in need of Chinese investments and trade. Although there are numerous bilateral political and economic relations between European countries and China, it is the EU’s collective policies and practices towards China that I analyse in this thesis.

One central aspect of the foreign policy of the EU, highlighted by scholars and the EU itself, is the promotion of norms and values. A debate within the literature on the EU as a global actor or power is concerned with normative and civilian aspects of the EU’s foreign and security policy (see e.g., Kagan 2003; Manners 2002; 2008; Sjursen 2007; Smith 2005a).

Duchene's conception of the EU as a 'civilian power' has been used by many scholars in their analysis of the EU's "particularity" (Sjursen 2007:1). The EU's ability to create stability and security through civilian, instead of military means, has been emphasised in the literature.

Originally the focus of analysis was on the relations between states within the EU, while more recent analyses have been of the EU's normative power in its external foreign policy. In 2002, Ian Manners put forward the Normative Power Europe theory (NPE) where he claimed that it was part of the EU identity to promote certain norms in their foreign relations.

The constitution of the EU as a political entity largely occurred as an elite-driven, treaty based, legal order. For this reason its constitutional norms represent crucial constitutive factors determining its international identity (Manners 2002:241).

Manners thus claimed that the uniqueness of the EU's history, its hybrid political system and its legal constitutions have led to a international identity where constitutional norms are of great important. This has, according to Manners, further "(...) accelerated a commitment to placing universal norms and principles at the centre of its relations with its member states and the world" (ibid.).

While some scholars have been critical to the concept of the EU as a normative power (see, e.g., Hyde-Price 2007; Sjursen 2007; Smith 2005a; Wagner 2007), others continue to stress the importance of normative power in the EU's foreign relations (see e.g., Aggestam 2008; Manners 2007; 2008; Mitzen 2007; Rieker 2009; Tocci 2008). Manners (2008) claims that the EU still is and will continue to be a normative power. He identifies EU norms that are given a concrete form in the EU treaties, norms that within the UN system are accepted as universal (ibid.:66). Furthermore, he argues that the EU acts in a normative way by engaging in dialogues and promoting these norms in its external relations (ibid.). Persuasion, shaming and arguments are normative means that the EU uses, and the EU also emphasises the rights and duties of states under international law (ibid.:77).

1.1 The EU – a normative actor towards China?

1.1.1 Research question and purpose of study

In this thesis, I examine the assumption that the EU is a consistent normative actor. I analyse how important norms are in the EU's foreign relations to China in the 5 years period 2005 - 2009. My research question is as follows:

How and to what degree is the EU's foreign policy discourse towards China of a normative character, and what normative elements can be identified in the EU's policy practice towards China? To what extent was there consistency between normative commitments and normative practices?

China is a strong and emerging global power, and a state that the EU has great economic interests in. China has been the EU's leading trade partner and the greatest source of imports since 2004 (Chan 2010:133). Between 2003 and 2009, the bilateral trade between the EU and China more than doubled (ibid.). While the EU benefits greatly from the wide-ranging trade relation, the relationship is challenged by the fact that some of the Chinese core values are in conflict with core values of the EU (Mattlin 2010; Men 2011). Especially challenging is the differences in the actors' divergent understanding of concepts such as human rights and sovereignty (Men 2011:545). An interesting question is therefore whether the EU's foreign policy towards China is of a normative character, even though the EU benefits greatly from the trade relations, and divergent views on key political values are evident.

A concern in the literature on the EU as normative power is the fact that the EU itself claims to be a normative actor. It is not necessarily a consistency between what the EU says it should do and what it actually does. Statements like “[t]he EU is becoming a global power; a force for good in the world “, and “[t]he values of democracy and human rights are in our collective DNA”, by the previous High Representative for the CFSP, Javier Solana (EurActiv 2006), illustrate how the EU considers promotion of norms as vital to its external relations. Does the EU act in accordance with its statements? The normative aspects of the EU's policies *and* practice towards China are relevant to investigate.

Furthermore, the analysis of the EU in the period of 2005 to 2009, serve as a case where the EU's normativity is put to the test. In the beginning of this period, the EU-China relationship

was characterised by optimism. The two increased the bilateral cooperation and both defined the relationship between the two as growing in importance and as a ‘strategic partnership’. The optimism declined, however, and China eventually expressed clearly in words and actions that it did not accept what it perceived as EU interference in internal affairs.

Especially in 2008, when president Sarkozy, who held the EU presidency, chose to meet with the exiled Tibetan Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, China demonstrated its discontent with what was described as interference in internal matters (see e.g., Gang 2008c). China both cancelled the planned EU-China Summit and made several statements regretting the EU’s act (Men 2009:3). It is interesting to examine whether the EU’s practices were normative in character, in accordance with a normative discourse in the EU, both before and after this powerful Chinese demonstration.

This thesis differs from scholarly work that evaluate the reasons behind the evolving relationship, and from analyses that aim to suggest how the EU can achieve a greater influence on China’s internal and external policies (see e.g., Chan 2010; Fox and Godement 2009; Holslag 2011; Mattlin 2010).

Some scholars have examined the normative aspects of the EU’s foreign policy towards China. Giuseppe Balducci (2008), Mikael Mattlin (2010) and Paul Haydon (2011) have all applied Manners’ NPE theory in their analyses of the EU-China relationship. Balducci (2008) analyses different European strategies and interests regarding the promotion of human rights in China. My research differs from Balducci’s in that I study the EU’s collective approach. Mattlin (2010) mainly study the EU’s weak impact on China related to democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and he focuses on how the EU *should* behave. This focus on impact, and on how the EU could gain influence, separates his research agenda from mine. Haydon (2011), applying NPE theory among several theoretical approaches in his study of EU’s human rights promotion in China, analyse the policy-making process in the EU and is concerned with how the economic interests have undermined the human rights promotion. Unlike Haydon, my main concern is how the EU promotes norms that are part of a normative discourse, visible in the EU’s treaties, documents and speeches. My analysis is more empirical than Haydon’s, in that I analyse how the EU spoke and acted in a specific period of time when the relationship to China was put to the test.

This thesis contributes to the literature on the EU's normative engagement, and sheds further light on the EU-China relationship. The empirical study of statements, speeches, official policy documents, and meetings will give insights into how the EU acts towards an important partner in a period when the economic crisis hit Europe and when conflicts related to Chinese behaviour internally is put on the agenda in the EU.

By using several theoretical contributions concerning the EU as a normative power or actor, both the conduct of and the results of this thesis, will contribution to the debate on how fruitful the concept of the EU as a normative actor is, and on how different conceptualisations can be operationalised in an empirical analysis. The claim that the EU is a coherent, inherent normative foreign policy actor is examined, and as my thesis serve as a case where the EU's normative engagement is put to the test, the findings can possibly strengthen the NPE theory, or contribute with knowledge to when and where the EU engage normatively.

1.1.2 Specification of research design

In order to answer the research question, the foreign policy discourse will be analysed applying discourse analysis tools, and the practices through the use of interviews and study of both official documents and secondary literature describing the practices of the EU.

My thesis builds on the assumption that foreign policy is more than the pursuit of objective material interests. Ideational factors such as identity and normative basis are also contributing to the foreign policy of states. Wendt (1995:74) argues that “[i]deas always matter, since power and interest do not have effects apart from the shared knowledge that constitutes them as such”. Foreign policy discourses are constructed ideational social structures that shape actors' identity and interests. Policy discourses also have a constitutive impact on how political actors behave in practice (Rieker 2006:18). Hence, a normative policy discourse in the EU could imply a normative practice.

Still, I follow practice scholars in their claim that while discourse and practice are interwoven and can be mutual constitutive, the relationship between practice and discourse is never straightforward (Doty 1997:377). By emphasising practice, my thesis follows scholars who ask for a 'practice turn' in IR, where a greater attention to 'the theorising of practices' is considered valuable to the understanding and interpretations of foreign policy (see e.g., Schatzki et al. 2001; Neumann 2002; Adler and Pouliot 2011).

I believe that there is an intrinsic value in studying practice parallel with discourse and in relation to discourses. It broadens the understanding of international politics, and gives insights into many parts of world politics that are often overlooked in the textual focused post-structural studies (Adler and Pouliot 2011:2). Furthermore, an examination of whether the EU pursues its stated objectives and actually acts as normatively as it often claims, requires a study of both discourses and practices. By examining the practices, my empirical research can also be seen as a response to the invitation from researchers such as Karen Smith (2005a) and Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot (2011), to study policy practice, and to pay attention to what the EU *does*, not only what the EU *is*.

To analyse the normativity of discourse and practice, I apply Ian Manners' (2002; 2008) theory of Normative Power Europe (NPE). In Manners (2002) view, it is part of the EU identity to be a normative power, and he identifies several universal norms that he claims the EU places at the centre of its foreign relations. Still, there has been some confusion regarding what 'normative power' means, which has led to debates on the fruitfulness of the concept (see e.g., Sjursen 2006; Pace 2007; Forsberg 2011). To answer my research question, I therefore also apply parts of Nathalie Tocci's (2008) conceptual framework for the analysis of a normative foreign policy. Her conceptualisation of normative goals and normative means are highly relevant to the study of the discourse and practice of the EU towards China. The goals will be represented in the policy discourse, while the use of normative (or 'non-normative') means can be an important part of the EU's foreign policy practice. I also apply Tuomas Forsberg's (2011) different ideal criteria of a normative power in my analysis. By using the conceptualisation of goals and means by Tocci and Forsberg, I am able to say something about the 'normative actorness' of the EU towards China, which concerns *both* discourse and practice. These theoretical contributions will be further outlined in the theory chapter.

If the EU really is a normative actor, in terms with the NPE of Manners (2002; 2008) and the conceptualisations of a normative foreign policy actor by Tocci (2008) and Forsberg (2011), I expect the EU to express normative goals, concerning the promotion of Manners' identified norms. Furthermore, I expect normative means to be applied to promote normative goals in the policy practices towards China.

Due to the economic and strategic interests in cooperation with China, and a challenging relationship due to some economic and normative conflicts, different outcomes than those that

are expected from the theory of the EU as a normative actor could occur. The economic interests and dependence on China could be so strong that the EU would not risk continuing the normative pressure in fear of a worsening of the relationship with China. The EU might express normative goals towards China at home, but behave differently in practice, by modifying and reducing the normative aspects in the direct dialogues with China. Furthermore, the analysis of discourse could reveal that economic or political interests are represented as more important than normative. Interest-based goals could, as Haydon (2011:3) argues, take precedence over normative goals. Especially after the conflict over Tibet in 2008, when China retaliated against the EU interference, it is possible that the EU did not flag the contested norms as high as previously.

While my theoretical basis, Normative Power Europe theory, leads me to expect that norms are strongly present in the practice due to the normative identity of the EU, an alternative hypothesis is that the material interests exceeds the normative when these two are in conflict. While I primarily will be analysing the normativity of the policy and the practices of the EU towards China in 2005 – 2009, I will also keep in mind alternative explanations for the goals and practices of the EU.

1.1.3 Definition of key concepts

EU foreign policy

In the study of the EU's foreign policy, I follow a growing scholarship that claims that the EU can be studied as an actor, and not only as an arena for bargaining. As Rieker (2006:4) puts it; "(...) the European integration process has gradually consolidated parts of Europe as a political actor, but without having become a supranational state". Especially with the reform of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU's actorness is more visible. The objective of the reform was a more coordinated foreign policy.

Still, there are different opinions on how to study the foreign policy of the EU, and of what the EU's foreign policy is. Traditionally in IR, foreign policy is understood as the *domaine réservé* of sovereign states, and the essence of foreign policy is the external objectives and interests of states, and the pursuit of these (Wong 2005:140). In the study of the EU's foreign policy, several definitions and approaches have been used. Some scholars have, for example,

emphasised how the EU's foreign policy is made, while others have focused on activity 'outputs' (see e.g., discussion on different approaches to EFP in Carlsnæs 2004).

An understanding of foreign policy as “actions and ideas designed by policy makers of an *international actor* to promote a change in the attitudes of other actors”, is suitable to the EU (Wong 2005:141). With such an understanding, not only is policy-making essential, but the global agenda is also emphasised. Furthermore, with this definition, the EFP is not confined to second-pillar activities. I will not study the *mechanism* through which the EU member states and institutions create foreign policy, but rather identify what are the actions and ideas dominating the EU's foreign policy towards China.

I understand the EU's foreign policy as actions undertaken by the institutions that are central in the creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The member states are influential in the foreign policy making in the Council. While the member states still remain largely in charge of CFSP, several Brussels-based institutions are also contributing to the decisions and the implementation of policies (Giegerich and Wallace 2010:441).

Policy discourse

A part of my research question is concerned with the *foreign policy discourse* of the EU towards China. There are different versions and definitions of discourse. A discourse can be understood as the construct of meanings, a social construct that represent perceptions of the world. Phillips and Jørgensen (2002:1) propose a general understanding of discourse as “(...) a particular way of talking about and understand the world (or an aspect of the world)”.

Discourses limit what is seen as meaningful actions and thoughts. The discourses in the EU's foreign policy thus act as 'linguistic boundaries' of what is prioritised and emphasised in decisions about goals and strategies of the EU towards other global actors.

In my analysis of the dominant foreign policy discourses in the EU concerning the relationship to China, I consider ideas and policy formulations of the Commission, the European Council, the Council of the European Union and of the Parliament as representing the dominant discourses. These institutions are all influential in the creation of the foreign policy of the EU, although their formal roles differ. Important individuals that represent the

CFSP, such as the previous and new High Representative¹, Commissioners and the rotating Presidency of the Council, also contribute to and represent the main foreign policy discourses of the EU.

Policy practices

This thesis also includes the study of what the EU *does* in practice. In the study of practices, part of the ‘practice turn’ literature can be helpful in the understanding of what is and how to assess the EU’s practice towards China. While the understanding of what practices are, and of what ‘theorising of practices’ means, are disputed, I find the understanding of practices that is set forwards by Adler and Pouliot (2011) useful in assessing the EU practices prior to studying the normativity.

While discourses contribute to how actors consider practices to be meaningful and useful, and practices can contribute to maintain or change discourses, these two phenomena can be studied separately. Adler and Pouliot (2011:2) argue that practice does have a discursive dimension, but they “(...) broaden practices’ ontology and thus do not limit the scope of our study to text and meaning.” Rather, they argue that

(...) practice forces us to engage with the relationship between agency and the social and natural environments, with both material and discursive factors, and with the simultaneous processes of stability and change. In fact, the concept of practice is valuable precisely because it also takes us ‘outside of the text’ (Adler and Pouliot 2011:2).

Practice is by Adler and Pouliot explained as “(...) socially meaningful patterns of action, which, by being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world” (ibid.:4). International practice is broadly understood as “(...) socially organized activities that pertain to world politics” (ibid.:6).

Acts that are planned and has a shared meaning to the EU, influenced by discourses, but also constrained by material factors, can be seen as EU practices. What thus separates EU *practices* from ordinary day-to-day events is that these acts are competent, meaningful acts to the EU. Assessing normative practices of the EU means therefore to assess what kind of

¹ In the period of analysis, 2005 - 2009, the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, was Javier Solana. After the Lisbon Treaty, the title changed to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and in November 2009, Catherine Ashton was appointed the new HR.

instruments are used in the competently performed acts that are acknowledged within the EU as meaningful, and how these have been used to promote normative goals. The EU deploys several political, economic and social instruments that can be used in regular and knowledge based foreign policy practice; diplomatic, economic and military means (Smith 2005b).

I analyse patterns of organised activities of the EU towards China, where activities of the EU is defined as practices undertaken by those who represent the EU's foreign policy; the HR, the Presidency of the EU, and activities and actions undertaken by the European Council, the Council of the EU, the Parliament and the Commission.

Normativity

When discussing the concept of 'normativity' in this thesis, I make use of Tocci's definition of 'normative'. Tocci (2008) uses a *non-neutral* interpretation of the notion normative, in contrast to a neutral interpretation. The contrasting neutral interpretation of normative, can simply mean what is understood as normal in international relations (ibid.:4). A neutral understanding would thus mean to generally influence what is seen as normal, in contrast to a normative imperative, and normative would be closely related to power (ibid.). Only great international actors can shape and exert influence on what is considered as normal. The neutral interpretation is therefore rejected, since all the powerful actors then would be normative in their promotion of interests.

A *non-neutral* interpretation is more common in the study of the EU. Such *non-neutral* understanding of normative is used by Tocci to explain a normative foreign policy:

[O]ur definition of normative foreign policy, while being non-neutral in ethical terms, must be based on set standards that are as universally accepted and legitimate as possible. These standards require an 'external reference point', and cannot be simply defined and interpreted by the international actor in question at will (Tocci 2008:5).

A normative foreign policy must therefore have an influential and regulating function, related to external reference points. These external reference points, such as human rights or democracy, can be searched for in three dimensions; the actor's *goals*, the policy *means* that it deploys, and in its achievements and *impact*. All three dimensions must be normative to define the EU, or other actors, as powerful normative foreign policy actors. I use the first two dimensions, 'goals' and 'means', as tools in my analysis. I do not study the 'impact' dimension, since it is not relevant to my research question. How to assess the normativity of

goals and means is further outlined in the theory chapter, as well as Forsberg's criteria 'normative interests' and 'normative means of power' (Forsberg 2011:1192-1194) and Manners' (2002; 2008) thesis of a Normative Power Europe (NPE).

1.2 Theoretical and methodological approach

1.2.1 A 'soft' constructivist approach

By analysing ideas and norms, and how discourses in the EU constitute practice, my research falls into the social constructivist paradigm. As Ifversen (2003:60) states: "To recognize the role of textuality means accepting a basic constructivist premise". Social constructivists are concerned with norms, and how these constitute actors' identities and interests. Norms are according to Farrell (2002:49) "(...) intersubjective beliefs about the social and natural world that define actors, their situations, and the possibilities of action". Norms thus shape the actors' scope of action in that these limit what is considered as accepted and appropriate behaviour.

Social constructivists do not reject that material objectives are of importance in international relations. However, they reject the view that material objects are all that matters. While material factors do exist independent from the social world, social constructivists often holds that these factors are given meaning through norms, ideas and beliefs, which are created and reproduced through communication, language and social practices (Meyer and Strickmann 2011:62).

Social constructivists have studied and attempted to understand the role of discursive structures and identities in foreign policy analysis (FPA). Constructivist approaches have also been used in the study of EU foreign policy (EFP). Several scholars have studied how the EU has developed collective identities, and how discourses have influenced and been influenced, by policy practice (see e.g., Neumann 1998; Rieker 2006; Mitzen 2007).

A constructivist approach is a stark contrast to a rationalist approach. In a rationalist, structural approach, state interests are fixed, and norms and identities are taken for granted (Farrell 2002:50). The rationalist approach assumes that states voluntarily engage in institutions when they see it as being in their interests, but regimes and institutions such as the

EU, have no autonomic power beyond the member states. The EU is seen as a bargaining arena, in which outcomes are decided by powerful member states.

By studying practices separate from policy discourses, I still part from the poststructuralists who, as Gadinger (2007:6) criticises, exclusively study the power of language in foreign policy and regard “(...) practice as collective sayings alone”. Actions and practice in foreign politics cannot be ignored or reduced to discursive actions only. Doty (1997:377) argues that “[p]ractice are generally embedded in discourse(s) which enable particular meaning(s) to be signified. However, discourses do not mechanically or instrumentally produce practice, nor do practices mechanically or instrumentally reproduce a particular discourse”. While closely related to discourse, the meaning of practice (doings and sayings) is never straightforward, and is determined also by material constrains (ibid.). Furthermore, Adler and Pouliot (2011:20) highlight that practices can stabilise social structures and construct agents’ ideas and subjectivities. With this position, a plain deterministic constructivist assumption that practices are all discursive expressions is rejected.

Considering all of the above, the label most appropriate for my research is ‘soft constructivist approach’. A ‘soft’ social constructivist approach is suitable as I assume that universal norms and values are central to the identity of the EU, that discourses and practices are interconnected even though discourses do not automatically produce practices, and that the sum of foreign policy actions of the EU is more than the actions of member states alone.

1.2.2 Methodology

With the aim of reaching a deep understanding of what the EU’s foreign policy discourses are, and how the EU has acted to promote its policy goals towards China, qualitative methods are suitable for use in my thesis. While statistic methods are suitable in the analysis of many units and few variables, a qualitative study is characterised by obtaining large amounts of data on few units. The usefulness of a qualitative case study approach is outlined. Below I also discuss my research design and the benefits of discourse analysis techniques in the analysis of foreign policy discourse, as well as the use of interviews and textual analysis in the study of practice. I outline how I have selected my sources, and finally I discuss some of the challenges related to validity and reliability in my research design.

The value of the case study

My research question requires an intensive analysis of one unit; the EU. My objective is to do an in-depth study of the normative aspects of EU-China relations, so that I can make valid claims regarding to what extent norms are present in the foreign policy of the EU towards China, and how norms are promoted in the EU's policy practice towards China. Gerring (2007:20-21) defines a case study as an "(...) intensive study of single case", where the analyst can achieve in-depth knowledge of one or few units by conducting many observations. It is precisely by doing an intensive study of this case over a short period of time that I can achieve detailed knowledge of the EU's foreign policy discourse and policy practices, which enables me to answer the research question. With such a detailed study, the conclusions and inferences I draw regarding what are the policy discourses and the policy practices of the EU, can achieve high internal validity (ibid:38, 49). Especially the concept of a normative foreign policy discourse is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, and thus a difficult concept to measure through a statistical approach. Only a detailed case study of all the aspects of the concept will make it possible to achieve high conceptual validity (George and Bennett 2005:19). Therefore a qualitative case study seems the most suitable research design.

A challenge regarding the use of a case study is the often low expected external validity (Gerring 2007:38). External validity concerns the ability to make generalisations from the results. It is hard to judge the representativeness of a case to a broader population, and make general claims about the average causal effects (George and Bennett 2005:22). Still, in my case it is possible to make some forms of generalisation. Gerring (2007:20) argues that while cases are complex and one of a kind, a single case is still a case of a population of cases. The study of a case can therefore tell us something about a larger class of cases. It is possible to see the normative EU in relations to China in comparison to the EU as a normative actor in general. My conclusions can give further insights to the claim of the EU as a normative actor, and possibly narrow or expand the scope of the theory. While it can be hard to be certain of whether the EU's foreign policies and practices towards China can be generalised to other EU foreign relations, my findings can possibly indicate how and when the EU will act normatively.

By analysing the EU's foreign policy and practice towards China, and especially by analysing a period marked by conflicts, I have chosen a 'least likely' case, where the theory of the EU as a normative actor is put to the test. A 'least likely' case is a 'crucial' case. The crucial case

method was introduced by Harry Eckstein (1975), who describes this type of case as one “(...) that *must closely fit* a theory if one is to have confidence in the theory’s validity, or, conversely, *must not fit* equally well any rule contrary to that proposed” (ibid.:118). The crucial case is thus central in confirming or disconfirming a theory. The crucial case method has been somewhat controversial, due to disagreements on whether the validity of a theory can be confirmed or disconfirmed by a single case that is supposed to *fit* or *not fit* a theory. (Gerring 2007:115). The crucial case is more often used as most likely and least likely to fit theoretical expectations, and is quite deductive in its design (ibid.:115-116). By using a case that is least *likely* to fulfil theoretical expectations, instead of a case that *must not* fulfil the expectations, my case is crucial in a weaker sense.

The expectation that the EU is a normative actor, meaning an actor representing a normative discourse, and conducting normative practices, is easier fulfilled in most other cases but the relationship with China. In my case, the EU faces an economic power, which it is economically dependent upon, and which clearly disprove the EU’s normative pressure. I can strengthen the NPE theory if I find the theory to be valid in this least likely case. If it does not fit, I can possibly make suggestions on further development of the theory, regarding the scope of the theory. I acknowledge that it is impossible to dismiss or confirm a theory by analysing only one case, but my analysis can give insights into the scope of the theory, and the crucial case provides “(...) important updating of a theoretical prior” (ibid.:121).

A soft discourse analysis

When analysing the discourses within the EU, I use what I term a ‘soft’ discourse analysis. This means that I use discursive text analysis techniques to understand the EU foreign policy discourse towards China. By adding *soft*, I part from poststructuralists who “(...) argue that intersubjective meaning *cannot* be apprehended in or by itself (...)” (Rieker 2006:18). I will argue that discourse analysis tools are valuable in identifying and understanding the discourse of the EU towards China. Through the study of language and language structures, I decode the discourse and assess its normativity.

A foreign policy discourse is an intersubjective concept, and it is not easily measured quantitatively. In contrast to material-based variables, intersubjective variables are not causal, but rather constitutive in form (ibid.). As discourses are systemic in character (Ifversen 2003:64), they do not cause action, but rather influence the ways actors define their situations

and give meaning to actors' choices. According to Foucault, discursive formations are found around certain themes (Larsen 1997:14). These formations occur when there is regularity between concepts, objects, types of statements or between thematic choices (ibid.). Wæver argues (2005:41) that "[m]ore interesting than the arguments made are the assumptions not stated, but necessary for the argument to be meaningful, the structural arrangements of key concepts, and chains of equivalence and oppositions".

The goal of a discourse analysis is thus to identify linguistic patterns and identify discursive formations. Central to the analysis is interpretation and understanding of the text. The analysis of the EU's foreign policy discourse concerns a 'decoding of political language'. Furthermore it requires an examination of how knowledge and perceptions on what are meaningful foreign policies and practices, which constitute a discourse formation. Still, it can be difficult to identify these patterns in the texts. This challenge can be overcome by looking for 'points of legitimation' in the texts, which means to search for assumptions and claims that look 'evident, natural and indisputable' (Rogers 2009:839).

In my thesis, I study how the goals are represented and legitimised, how it is seen meaningful to pursue them, and how the norms identified by Manners (2002; 2008) are used in legitimating the goals and means. I examine how China is represented by the EU, and how this representation legitimises, and makes meaningful, the EU goals. I look for changes in which norms that are seen as important, and in how the goals and means are argued for. How to assess the normativity of the discourse is outlined in the theory chapter.

Discourse analysis is based on close reading of documents, which makes it necessary to carefully select the texts (Bergström and Boreus 2005:354). Wæver (2005:40) argues for detailed reading, with scientists slowly recognising patterns and formulations that eventually can give insights into the discourses.

Since my object is to study the EU's official policies and politics towards China, I operationalise my textual universe to official documents produced by the EU concerning the EU-China relationship in the period of 2005-2009. To identify the main foreign policy discourses in the EU I analyse texts and speeches of the central representatives of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. I examine official documents and speeches produced by the EU Commission and Commissioners, the Council of the European Union, the European Council, the European Parliament, and of the previous and new HR, the president

of the Council and the rotating Presidency of the Union, given in the period of analysis. These are central representatives of foreign policy discourses and their speeches and texts are relevant to my thesis.

All speeches and documents from the EU with references to China are valuable to the analysis, but the speeches and texts produced by the most central representatives of the CFSP are of main importance. These are given priority, but texts produced on lower levels in the EU will also be included as they can contribute to the overall understanding of the discourses in the EU's foreign policy towards China. The Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament; *EU-China: Closer partners, growing responsibilities*² from 2006 is a key document, indicating the discourses dominating in the Commission. The Commissioners speeches given in China or on China are also studied thoroughly. This also applies to Council conclusions on the EU-China relationship, and to the European Parliament's adopted texts regarding China and the EU-China relations. Press releases by the EU prior to or after political meetings between the two are also of value to the analysis.

The study of practice

The practices of the EU constitute the regular, commonly acknowledged behaviour of the EU towards China. The EU's policy practice can consist of the use of diplomatic, economic or military instruments. I need to identify what have been the acts of the EU towards China between 2005 and 2009, and to analyse whether these have been of a normative character. Diplomatic means will be examined in particular, since the EU mainly applies this form of policy instrument towards China. To evaluate the normativity of the practice I look for what Manners, Tocci and Forsberg argue to be normative means. This is further outlined in the theory chapter.

The analysis of practices is divided into two main forms of practices, based on Grunig's (1993) classification of diplomacy and interaction according to *direction*. Firstly, the practices that the EU engages in when the EU and China communicate directly, labelled 'two-way communication', are examined. This means the practices where both the EU and China engage, and information is exchanged. This includes, e.g., dialogues, meetings and agreements between the two. Secondly, I examine the practices that the EU applies

² Hereafter referred to as the Communication.

‘unilaterally’, that is, practices that are aimed to influence, without engaging directly with China. These are labelled ‘one way communication’. Policy means that could be used in this kind of one-way communication include statements, and other symbolic acts aimed at influencing China through international pressure. The normativity of these two types of practices is further examined.

The assessment of practice and the further examination of the normativity of this practice require a detailed reading of different documents that can help to shed light on what the EU has said and done in relation to China in the period, and to assess the regularity and patterns of these actions. I analyse the Joint Statements that are products of the EU-China Summits, which indicate what goals have been promoted by the EU in the Summits, and what China has accepted as common commitments. Furthermore, the Presidency statements and adopted resolutions by the Parliament are examined. I also study other forms of documents from the EU and China, newspaper articles, and secondary literature that describe the concrete political acts of the EU towards China. I have additionally conducted some interviews with EU employees in Brussels.³ The interviews gave additional insight into what the EU’s practice has been, which was not observable in the documents.

1.2.3 Reflections on validity and reliability

The case study gives me an opportunity to do an in-depth analysis into the main discourses and practices of the EU towards China and I obtain a deeper knowledge of the European norm promotion processes than a quantitative study. With this depth, I should have strong valid justifications for the claims I make regarding the practices and the understanding of discourses. As discussed earlier, there are many challenges concerning external validity. There are low expectations of making valid claims as to whether the discourses and practices of the EU are normative also towards other actors than China, or in other periods towards China. Still, the findings will contribute to the overall picture of the EU as a normative actor, and could contribute to a greater understanding of the circumstances under which the EU is a normative actor.

³ These interviews, conducted in Brussels 17 April 2012, were semi-structured, and the anonymity of the respondents is maintained.

In this case study, using mostly discursive and textual analyses, interpretations are essential and achieving high reliability can be challenging. Reliability concerns how the research can be verified. Other scientists could obtain different results than I do, due to different interpretations of the texts. The large text material I analyse can furthermore contribute to difficulties in replicating this research, than a more narrow scope would have. I will therefore carefully explain how I reach my conclusions (Bergström and Boreus 2005:353).

Transparency is important to ensure high reliability. This means that I will be as open and clear as possible on all the choices made in the research design. I have explained what kind of method of analysis I use and I have elaborated why certain texts are chosen. The reader can therefore hopefully do a critical evaluation of my choices. By using citations in my analysis, the study also obtains a higher transparency by making it easier for the reader to evaluate my interpretations of the texts (ibid.:354). The citations included in the analysis are those I find the most representative of the discourses after analysing the large amounts of texts.

1.3 The thesis in outline

In *chapter two* I present my theoretical framework; the NPE theory by Ian Manners (2002; 2008). I also present parts of Nathalie Tocci's (2008) conceptual framework of a normative foreign policy and Tuomas Forsberg's (2011) conceptual analysis of an ideal type of NPE, which I apply. In *chapter three* I analyse the main discourses and practices of the EU towards China in 2005 and 2006. In *chapter four* I analyse the policy discourses and practices towards China in the period of 2007 and 2008, and in *chapter five* I analyse discourses and practices towards China in 2009. In *chapter six* I present the main findings, and do an evaluation of whether the EU is a consistent normative actor. Further, I comment on which factors are relevant to when and how the EU acts as a normative actor, and on what consequences my findings might have for further research on the EU's normative engagement and on the EU-China relationship.

2 Theoretical framework

In the analysis of whether the EU's foreign policy discourse and practice towards China is of a normative character, I use the Normative Power Europe (NPE) theory of Ian Manners, which seeks to explain the normative agenda and power of the EU in its foreign relations. In this chapter I first elaborate Manners' theory, and the conceptualisations of a normative power and a normative foreign policy by Nathalie Tocci and Tuomas Forsberg. Then I explain how I use these theoretical contributions in my analysis of the discourse and practice of the EU towards China.

Manners' theory is part of a large debate on what the EU is and how to understand its foreign policy. His thesis has been acknowledged as an important contribution both in academic studies of the EU's foreign policy and in policy debates within the EU (Forsberg 2011:1184). The Normative Power Europe theory (NPE) is based on what the EU *is*. It is the EU's uniqueness that is the reason for its normative foreign policy, and his thesis can thus be put in the scholarly literature that emphasises the *sui generis* nature of the EU. By adding Nathalie Tocci's framework on how to study whether the EU or other actors have normative foreign policy goals and normative foreign policy means, I get a precise tool in analysing whether the discourse, and what the EU *does* in its practice, has a normative character. In this I part from the idea that the EU is always a normative power, but I rather acknowledge that the EU *sometimes* can have normative goals and use normative means. Next to Tocci (2008), I also use some of the conceptualisation criteria of Forsberg (2011), which helps to understand what are normative interests and practices.

While the NPE theory has been acknowledged as an important contribution to the understanding of the EU and the EU's foreign policy, the idea of the EU as a normative power has been challenged. Some scholars have questioned the theoretical premises, whether norms influence the foreign policy of the EU, or whether norms and values only camouflage material interests (see e.g., Hyde-Price 2007; Youngs 2004). Hyde-Price (2007:54) claims that values are *always* second-order concerns, below core national security interests. The values will be sacrificed when they are in conflict with security interests. Further, it has been argued that the promotion of values is only a cover-up for national interests. Other underlying strategic and economic interests are what motivate the norm promotion (Youngs 2004:426). This criticism

can indeed best be met by putting the NPE theory to the test and do a thorough analysis of its claims.

Secondly, what the concept normative power means, and how it can be used in a fruitful way, has been questioned. Pace (2007) and Sjursen (2006) argue that the confusion over what a normative power really means has made the concept analytically weak. A clearer conceptualisation, with quantifiable criteria and standards, is required. Forsberg (2011) argues that the EU as a normative power best can be seen as an ‘ideal type’, and that a clearer understanding of what is a normative power can make the concept more usable in study and understanding of the EU's foreign policy. He argues that while a certain degree of conceptual pluralism must be accepted, it is still important for social scientists to “(...) explicate the meanings of contested concepts and to be as consistent as possible when using them within a single study” (ibid.:1190). Only by reconstructing and clarifying what is meant by the key concepts within the normative power literature, a meaningful debate can be conducted and the theory can be applicable to the EU (ibid.). By elaborating and using two important aspects of a normative power, that is goal/interests and means, and by using the concrete norms that Manners identify in his thesis, I attempt to clarify how I understand the concept, and how I will study the normative aspects in my empirical analysis.

2.1 Normative Power Europe theory

Ian Manners introduced the concept ‘Normative Power Europe’ in 2002. He argues for a refocus of the debate away from the discussion of whether the EU is a civilian or military actor (Manners 2002:238). Rather, the EU’s ideational impact in the world can be understood as normative power, and this kind of power should gain greater attention (ibid.). The EU’s ability to shape opinions and what is defined as ‘normal’ in international relations is part of the normative power of the EU (ibid.:239). Simply by being an important non-state actor in the world, the EU challenges the normality in the state-centric international relations (Manners 2008:65). He also claims that

[t]he EU has gone further towards making its external relations informed by, and conditional on, a catalogue of norms which come closer to those of the European convention on human rights and fundamental freedoms (ECHR) and the universal declaration of human rights (UDHR) than most other actors in world politics (Manners 2002:241).

The EU differs from other global actors in its normativity (ibid.:240). What makes the EU normatively different from other actors is its unique history, its new hybrid polity of supranational and international forms of government, and the political-legal constitution. In the post-war Europe, security concerns were important driving forces for integration. The creation of several institutions and policies took place in a time where European states were committed to pool their resources to strengthen norms such as liberty and peace. Also, the unique hybrid structure of the Union, with both international and supranational forms of governments, transcends the Westphalian norm system. Gradually, this new hybrid entity has emphasised the importance of certain norms and principles, common to all the member states (ibid.). That the EU's constitution and legal order also has been driven forward by elites, is emphasised by Manners (ibid.:241). Therefore, he argues, "(...) its constitutional norms represent the crucial constitutive factors determining its international identity" (ibid.). This 'differentness' of the EU has led to a strong commitment to the promotion of certain norms and rights, and according to Manners (ibid.:242) pre-disposes the EU to act in a normative way.

2.1.1 The EU's normative principles

The norms and values that the EU promotes can be found in its treaties. Manners identifies nine normative principles that the EU promotes globally, that are "(...) generally acknowledged, within the United Nations system, to be universally applicable" (Manners 2008:66). In his article from 2002, Manners (2002:240) argues that common principles between the member states have been emphasised in the hybrid polity structure, and are explicitly defined in the Treaty on European Union, TEU. In his article "The normative ethics of the European Union" in 2008, he updates and revises the identified norms and discusses the way that these norms are being promoted. Manners claims (2008:68) that that EU member states, institutions and citizens are willing to protect these norms. To find and argue for these norms, Manners uses what was then the most recent stage in the constitutive process, namely the Reform Treaty of 2007.⁴ The first five norms are defined as core norms by Manners, while the last four are labelled 'minor' subsidiary norms (Manners 2002:242).

⁴ The Reform Treaty refers to the "Lisbon Treaty Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community", which was titled the Lisbon Treaty after its ratification in December 2007.

The first norm Manners identifies is *sustainable peace*. With the European experience of war, peace was a key principle in the making of a European Union. The EU was created to ensure that war again on the continent would be unthinkable (Manners 2008:68). Also in the EU's external policy, development, aid, cooperation, dialogues and conflict solution has been emphasised. With the growing civilian and military capabilities, the EU has put a stronger emphasis on sustainable peace missions, that are in accordance with the UN Charter (ibid.:69). In the Reform Treaty, promotion of peace is made an explicit goal; within the Union, in cooperation with neighbourhood states and in the EU's external relations through the CSDP and in the promotion of international peace and security (ibid.).

The second norm *social freedom* is also stressed in the Reform Treaty. Article 3-2 states that the citizen of the EU shall be offered freedom, security and justice. Freedom, Manners (ibid.) argues, is always declared as a main principle alongside democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The EU's five freedoms are promoted inside the Union, and free trade is promoted globally. Fundamental freedoms, like the right to free expression and thoughts are found in the Reform Treaty (ibid.:70).

The third norm is *consensual democracy*. The Reform Treaty suggests that support of, and consolidation of, democracy should be promoted in the EU's external relationships (ibid.). In article 10a-2 (b) it is stated that

The Union shall define and pursue common policies and actions, and shall work for a high degree of cooperation in all fields of international relations, in order to ... consolidate and support democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law.

The fourth norm is *associative human rights*. Fundamental rights are protected and promoted in the European Convention for the Protocol of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. These rights are products of the constitutional EU history and should, according to the Reform Treaty, be general principles of the EU's law. These rights include both individual and collective human rights. Internationally, these rights are promoted, among others through trade and aid (ibid.:70, 71).

The fifth norm is *supranational rule of law*. The Reform Treaty states that the Union "(...) shall promote multilateral solutions to common problems, in particular in the framework of the United Nations" (cited in Manners 2008:71). Manners (ibid.) argues that the rule of law is supranational in three ways. It is communitarian in the pooling of sovereignty by member

states in the EU law. It is international because it promotes participation in supranational laws, by both the EU and other actors. Finally, it is cosmopolitan, in that it promotes the development and participation of the EU and its member states in humanitarian law that is individually applicable (ibid.).

The sixth norm, and the first of the subsidiary norms, is *inclusive equality*. In the Reform Treaty, an objective for the Union is to combat discrimination and exclusion, and to promote equality and solidarity (ibid.:72). Discrimination on any ground is prohibited in the 2000 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the Union. Equality among member state citizens is a fundamental principle, and certain forms of discrimination to combat are defined. The EU also promotes equality among cultures and gender in its external relations (ibid.:73).

The seventh norm is *social solidarity*. This norm is evident in article 2 in the Reform Treaty in expressions such as “balanced economic growth” and “social market economy” and in the promotion of “social justice” and the combat of “social exclusion” (ibid.). In the Reform Treaty, promotion of global solidarity is an objective.

The eighth norm is *sustainable development*. Sustainable management of natural resources in the world is defined as a global objective for the EU in the Reform Treaty. A balance between economic growth and environmental protection is a goal, and the EU seeks to promote sustainable development between member states, in the enlargement of the Union and in its foreign and environmental policies (ibid.:74).

The ninth, and last, norm is *good governance*. The Reform Treaty states that the EU shall work for greater global cooperation, to (...) promote an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance” (cited in Manners 2008:74). Two elements are important; the civil societies’ participation and greater multilateral cooperation (ibid.).

2.1.2 The spread of norms

To be a normative power the EU needs to spread and diffuse the norms, which Manners claims that the EU does. Manners (2007:16) argues that relative absence of physical force is significant in the diffusion and spreading of these norms. Still, his outline of how the EU spreads its norms is not explained thoroughly. In the original thesis, he (2002:244) identifies

six factors that are important for the EU in the norm diffusion internationally; ‘contagion’ (unintentional norm diffusion to other actors from the EU), ‘information diffusion’ (strategic communication), ‘procedural diffusion’ (institutionalisations of relationships with third parties), ‘transference’ (when the EU exchange goods or aid or assistance with third parties, standards and norms may be exported too) ‘overt diffusion’ (the physical presence of the EU in organisations or in third states) and ‘cultural filters’ (interplay between the creation of social and political identity and the construction of knowledge). This mechanism of spreading norms is not further elaborated and in 2008, Manners argues that the EU spread its norms in three ways. The EU’s constitutive principles are being promoted as ‘living as an example’, ‘being reasonable’ and ‘doing least harm’. Also these factors are rather general, and I will therefore use Tocci’s and Forsberg’s conceptualisations of a normative foreign policy in the assessment of a normative discourse and normative practice of the EU. These two contributions build on, and further develop, the NPE theory of Manners.

2.2 Tocci’s conceptualisation of a ‘normative foreign policy’

Nathalie Tocci (2008) claims that many analyses of the EU as a normative power define the EU as normative because of what the EU *is*. She presents an analytical framework on whether the EU really does have a normative foreign policy, and whether other actors as well can have a similar normative foreign policy. The framework she presents is thus applicable to other actors as well as the EU. I will here present the two dimensions that are relevant to this thesis. Normative goals can be identified in normative policy discourses and the use of normative means is part of a normative practice.

2.2.1 Normative goals

Tocci (ibid.:7) uses Wolfers’ conception of ‘milieu goals’ in her definition of normative goals. They are consistent over time, and are not pursued in defence of or to obtain possessions. They are instead aimed at “(...) shaping conditions beyond their national boundaries” (Wolfers 1962, cited in Tocci 2008:7). ‘Milieu goals’ are thus wider goals than ‘possession goals’, which promote national interests. Tocci explains ‘milieu goals’ as

(...) those which, while indirectly related to a particular actor’s specific interests, are essentially concerned with the wider environment within which international relations

unfold. Furthering milieu goals may contribute to the advancement of possession goals. However, unlike possession goals, milieu goals are pursued consistently over time, and not only at the time when they also represent immediate possession goal (Tocci 2008:7).

Tocci intends to make a clear definition and thus define normative foreign policy goals as “(...) those which aims to shape the milieu goals by regulating it through international regimes, organisations and law” (ibid.). Normative goals are goals that pursue international regulation, that are intended to be binding to all actors, also the actor in question (ibid.:8). This is fundamental to add, she argues, because “(...) international law is also the product of international power relations and not a magic formula that perfectly objectivises and universalises norms” (ibid.:8).

2.2.2 Normative means

Some of the normative power literature has, as mentioned, emphasised that normative means must be of a non-military art. These could be economical, diplomatic, cultural or social (ibid.). But this clear line is not beneficial, as the harm from the non-military means can be as severe or even more severe than from the use of military means. Tocci (ibid.:9) argues that *how* the means are used is more relevant than what type they are. She (ibid.:10) therefore chooses to define normative means as “ (...) instruments (regardless of their nature) that are deployed within the confines of the law”. What characterise ‘normative practice’ then, is a multilateral behaviour when possible, and acting with the authorisation from the UN and with a general respect of international law (ibid.).

2.3 Forsberg’s conceptualisation of a ‘normative power’

Tocci’s framework is helpful in understanding of the two dimensions, normative goals and means. Still, her definition of the dimensions, especially the last one, is broad in character. Most of the EU’s foreign policy practice towards China is conducted within the confines of international law. Tuomas Forsberg’s (2011) conceptualisation of a normative power consists of a number of more concrete and narrower criteria. Therefore, his conceptualisation can be helpful in narrowing down what is a normative means and a normative practice. Also his understanding of normative interests can supplement Tocci’s normative goals.

Forsberg argues that at least five types of criteria of a normative power have been used in the normative power debates; it has a 'normative identity', 'normative interests', 'behaves according to norms', 'uses normative means of power' and 'achieves normative ends' (Forsberg 2011:1191-1195). Of these five, it is the normative interests and the use of normative means of power that is most useful to my research question, because the former is part of the foreign policy discourse of the EU towards China, and the latter can be part of the EU's practice towards China.

2.3.1 Normative interests

When Forsberg (2011:1192) discusses normative interests, he argues that normative interests differ from strategic and self-regarding interests. He refers to Toje's (2008:126-127) argument on how the EU's foreign policy differs from others by the will to engage not in means/end oriented foreign policy activities, but rather in activities that are statements of values. Further, Wolfer's 'milieu goals', contrasted to the more self-interested 'possession goals', are highlighted as a common understanding of normative interests (Forsberg 2011:1192). Normative interests are thus quite similar to Tocci's normative goals. The EU's normative goals are defined as unselfish and based on certain values, in opposition to goals that the EU could benefit from, for example in economic terms.

2.3.2 Normative means of power

Forsberg (2011:1194) states that a characteristic of a normative power is that it uses normative means of power in contrast to military and economic means of power. He argues that nobody would suggest that the EU always uses normative means, since the EU has great economic power that it often uses. Still, in many cases the EU does not use its economic and military power. Persuasion by referring to general rules and activating commitments by cooperation are normative means that the EU sometimes uses (*ibid.*).

Forsberg's understanding of normative means differs partly from Tocci's. Both argue that international cooperation and commitment to international rules can be seen as a normative means, but Forsberg also argues that a distinction between (1) economic and military means and (2) normative means is possible. Tocci rejects this distinction by arguing that how instruments are used is more relevant than what type they are. Still, predominantly in the

literature on normative power, the use of military instruments is not regarded as a normative way of acting.

Forsberg (2011:1195) further argues that a way of understanding a normative power is to see what kind of mechanism of power that it can use. These mechanisms of power can also be understood as ways of using normative power, and can thus be helpful in the understanding of a normative practice. Four mechanisms for the use of normative power are defined, that I use in the assessment of a normative practice. First, 'persuading others', second, 'invoking norms', third, 'shaping discourse of what is normal' and last, 'the power of example' (ibid.:1196).

'Persuasion of others' is closely associated with ideological power. Manners (2008:77) argues that "(...) in its most general form normative power relies more on persuasion, argument and shaming than on illegitimate force to shape world politics". Forsberg points out that "[p]ersuasion involves skills such as the use of eloquent rhetoric, personal and collective attention or capitalizing on relevant knowledge" (Forsberg 2011:1196). Public diplomacy and information campaign is part of this concept (ibid.). This mechanism also corresponds to Manners' (2002) norm diffusion mechanism 'informational diffusion'.

'Invoking norms' means activation of commitment. This mechanism of power corresponds partly to Manners' 'procedural diffusion'. When normative clauses are made in agreements or in other ways, and a party can invoke the commitment when the other one violates the agreement, this can be seen as invoking norms and is a normative means (Forsberg 2011:1197).

'Shaping the discourse of what is normal' can be seen as a normative result or impact, but "(...) it is also important to see it as a vehicle of power" (ibid.). It is an indirect way of using power, and the mechanism is close to 'cultural filter' of Manners (ibid.). It is relevant to study this when normative results or impact is measured and one assess whether the means of power has been a success or not. Yet one can still see this as an applicable normative mechanism.

'The power of example' means that the EU can be a model for others. Manners called this mechanism of spreading norms by example as 'contagion' (ibid.). When the EU towards China acts as good example, following and emphasising universal norms, and encourages China to act and prioritise likewise, the EU acts in a normative way.

2.4 Assessing the normativity of discourse and practice

2.4.1 A normative discourse

While a discourse analysis is inductive in method, I need a way to assess whether the discourse is of a normative character. Three ways of assessing the normativity of the policy discourse can be found in the theoretical contributions. First, I study whether Manners' nine norms are central themes in the discourse, and are norms that the EU promotes towards China. In this, the normativity is determined by examining whether the five core norms and the four subsidiary norms have a central place in the discourse. Especially the presence of the core norms indicates a discourse that to a great extent can be defined as normative.

Tocci's conceptualisation of normative goals and Forsberg conceptualisation of normative interests are further relevant to the understanding of whether the discourse can be defined as 'normative'. Secondly, therefore, I study whether the goals are thought pursued within international regulations, and with reference to international law, as emphasised by Tocci. When the goals are sought through regulation and multilateralism, binding to all parties, this can be seen as normative goals. When such normative goals are central in the discourse, e.g., when the EU expresses that it will regulate the policy cooperation with China into institutional frameworks and binding agreements, and the policy goals are articulated with reference to legal rules and practices, the discourse can be labelled normative.

Thirdly, also from both Tocci's and Forsberg's frameworks, an important task will be to analyse whether the goals and interests that are articulated can be understood as 'milieu goals'. When the EU mainly refers to and seeks 'milieu goals', the discourse can be defined as normative. Contrasting 'milieu goals' are the interest-based 'possession goals'. When the EU promotes normative goals and shows a will to engage in activities that could potentially hurt the EU, the discourse can be understood as primarily normative.

A discourse most likely is *not* purely normative or purely interest-based. There are degrees to which a discourse is normative. A discourse where, for example, Manners subsidiary norms are partly relevant to how the EU sees it as meaningful to engage with China, where international law and multilateralism are promoted, but the promotion of economic beneficial goals is dominating, can be labelled partly normative or normative to some extent. If, on the

other hand, the core norms are strongly promoted towards China, and these are promoted without legitimising such promotion by economic or political gains, this discourse can be labelled as strongly normative or normative to a large extent.

2.4.2 A normative practice

From the theoretical contributions, there are several ways of defining whether the EU does have a normative practice. Firstly, I first examine whether the policy means that are applied by the EU do not violate international rules and practices, as Tocci emphasises. A multilateral behaviour, conducted within the confines of national and international law can be seen as a normative practice.

Secondly, another criterion of a normative practice is that the policy means in use are not of a military kind. Both Manners and Forsberg argue that the use of military power is not line with the acts of a normative power. While Tocci argues that all types of policy instruments potentially can be normative, Forsberg separate normative from economic and military means of power. Still, Manners (2007:19) argues that the relative absence of physical force is central in the normative practice of the EU. I therefore understand the use of diplomatic and economic means as being part of a normative practice, in contrast to the use of military means.

Thirdly, a way of assessing the normativity of the practice is to see whether the EU policy means are used in a normative way to promote normative goals. This calls for a study of *how* the means have been used. Forsberg's and parts of Manners' typologies of mechanism of norm promotion are thus useful to examine. Their mechanisms can be summarised in three parts.

First and foremost is 'strategic communication and persuasion'. In this lies public diplomacy, the use of information campaigns, and rhetorical speaking. When the EU argues for a given norm in dialogues with Chinese representatives in meetings, this can be categorised as a normative practice. A more indirect way of acting normative is to shape the discourse of what is normal. When EU representatives meet Chinese representatives in the yearly Summits, they can influence China in ways of thinking about concepts such as Manners' norms. A way of measuring how strong the diplomacy and engagement for the norms that Manners has identified has been, is to see how central the EU norms are in the joint statements of China

and the EU. If the norms are central, it can indicate that the EU have had a stronger normative persuasion than if the norms are not visible. The use of official statements and declarations, urging and pressuring for normative changes in China, can also be considered as a normative practice.

The second way of promoting normative goals is the ‘living as an example’. The EU uses this mechanism of norm diffusion when it acts in accordance with international law and norms, and refers to norms in dialogues with China or in one-way communication. Encouragement of acting as the EU is part of the normative way of acting.

The third way of promoting norms is the use of ‘procedural instruments’. In this, institutionalisation of the cooperation and dialogue with China is central. If the EU actively build and maintain institutional framework for the dialogues and contact, or agreements with normative clauses, it can be viewed as normative practice. Also, if the EU can activate commitment, i.e., if normative commitments agreed with China can be invoked, the EU can use a normative means of power. In economic agreements and other formal agreements, there is thus a potential of using normative clauses to ensure compliance to normative commitments.

2.4.3 A normative foreign policy actor

This thesis is concerned with investigating the extent to which both the discourse and practice are normative, and whether what is *said* is consistent with what is *done* by the EU. If *both* discourse and practice can be said to be normative, the EU can be understood as a consistent normative foreign policy actor. Still, there are several possible outcomes in the period of 2005-2010. First, there could be consistency or not *in time*, both regarding discourse and practice. Secondly there could also be consistency or not in *normativity* between discourse and practice.

3 Building a strategic partnership (2005 and 2006)

In this chapter I analyse EU discourses and practices in the period of 2005-2006. I first identify two main foreign policy discourses, concerning the EU-China relations, and examine how the main goals of the EU are represented. Then I assess the normativity of these discourses. Furthermore, I analyse what the EU has done in practice towards China, and determine whether these practices can be labelled normative. I conclude by discussing the consistency between the expressed goals and the practices, and in what instances the EU can be understood as a normative actor.

3.1 Discourses: Pursuing a ‘strategic partnership’ overshadow normative concerns

Based on the analysis of the large body of texts from 2005 and 2006, I identify two main discourses. Here I examine the main goals presented by the EU, the legitimising contexts in which these goals are argued for, and through which means the EU will seek to achieve them. Lastly, I discuss the normativity of these two discourses in light of the theoretical contributions discussed in chapter two.

3.1.1 The ‘partnership’ discourse

The goal of a strong partnership

In 2005, the EU and China celebrated their 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Several visits between political representatives of the EU and China occurred in 2005 and 2006. Both speeches and official documents addressed the EU-China relationship. A strong partnership between the two was stated as a main goal of the EU in a large part of these texts. ‘Partnership’ was thus a key issue in a first identified discourse. This discourse was strongly represented in the Commission, the European Council and to some extent in the Council.

In the Commission, a strong partnership was stated as the most important goal of the EU in its relations to China. On a visit to China in July 2005, the President of the European

Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso (2005), stated: “I have come here (...) with one central message: the EU is deeply committed to developing its strategic partnership with China further”. The commitment to a partnership also reappeared several times in speeches by the European Commissioner for Trade, Peter Mandelson (see e.g., 2005a; 2006b). The strengthening of the partnership was further emphasised in the implementation plan of the EU policy towards China in the 2005 – 2006 National Indicative Programme (NIP),⁵ (European Commission 2005b) and the ‘fundamental’ goal of a comprehensive partnership was emphasised in the Commission’s Communication: “EU-China: closer partners, growing responsibilities” (European Commission 2006b).

The determination to develop a strong partnership by intensifying economic and political dialogues with China was also highlighted in the European Council in June 2005 (European Council 2005:19) and in the Council Conclusions on the EU-China Strategic Partnership in December 2006 (The Council of the European Union⁶ 2006e). Hence, the Commission in particular, but also the Council and the European Council, promoted the partnership goal.

Strategic and economic partnership

The EU sought two kinds of partnership with China. Firstly, a strategic partnership was promoted, where cooperation on global challenges was an objective. Secondly, the EU promoted a bilateral trade partnership, where economic benefits were sought through trade and investments. These two kinds of partnership were motivated by two different representations of China.

In speeches and in the foreign policy documents in this period, China was presented as a significant actor and partner in responses to international challenges. Mandelson (2005a:3) emphasised the important role in which China was expected to play in many international areas, such as in the support of UN peacekeeping operations and in collective approaches to combat climate change. Global economic disagreements, non-proliferation, international development, especially in Africa, and energy security, were other issues emphasised by the EU as challenges that required Chinese participation (European Commission 2006b:5, 6, 11;

⁵ The NIP outlines how to follow the Strategy Paper for China for 2002 – 2006 (CSP). The CSP was approved by the Commission on 25th February 2002, and entitled ‘A maturing partnership – shared interests and challenges in EU-China relations’.

⁶ Hereafter referred to as the Council.

Council 2006e:7-8). A 'strategic partnership' was therefore represented as needed by the EU to solve and have an impact on these global challenges. The EU furthermore portrayed a partnership with China as vital in order to secure a multilateral international order (European Commission 2006b:2).

The global partnership was thus represented as necessary for the EU to deal with international challenges and to secure a multilateral order. The goal of increasing the projection of power through cooperation with China is a 'possession goal', as a partnership would serve the EU's interest in a global political role. The 'possession goal' is, in contrast to the 'milieu goal', understood as an interest-based goal, according to Tocci (2008) and Forsberg (2011). Still, the objective of securing a multilateral order can be understood as a normative goal, as regulation of international affairs, binding to both EU and China, is a norm identified by Manners (2008:74). Furthermore, the pursuit of these political goals would not violate international law. Still, the goal of securing the EU a global strategic role was more important than the promotion of multilateralism in this discourse. Hence, 'possession goals' are more strongly pursued than 'milieu goals'.

Secondly, China was represented as an economic power and as an important trade partner to the EU. The EU in this discourse expressed optimism related to China's economic growth and an interest in a potentially enhanced economic cooperation between the two.

The EU presented the Chinese growth as beneficial to the Chinese society (Communication 2006b:3). Still, optimism regarding how the EU could gain from the Chinese growth was an even more central theme in this discourse. Commissioners stressed that a strong economic development in China was in the EU's interests, and that the Chinese market offered large opportunities to European companies (European Commission 2006b:7; Mandelson 2005a:3). The growth in China, and the expanding middle class, signified a potential larger market for companies from the EU. The EU, as a large trade actor, therefore greatly valued the trade relationship with China (Barroso 2005:5).

This strong emphasis on the economic value to the EU of China's growth, and on the economic relationship between the two, differs strongly from the normative 'milieu goals'. In this period, the EU was positive to China's growth and the economic partnership because the EU gained from it. The promotion of the partnership was not based on certain unselfish or possible unrewarding EU values. Hence, the goal of forging a strong economic and beneficial

bond to China can be seen an interest-based ‘possession goal’, highlighting that the discourse is mainly ‘non-normative’ in character.

A consistent finding in the discourse is that China was represented as an *equal* partner to the EU. Mandelson (2005a:3) stated that China and the EU faced the same uncertainties in the world, and that the partnership was necessary in addressing these. The EU constructed an impression of common challenges and responsibilities. Both actors were presented as interdependent major powers and global partners, with shared interests in effective multilateralism and in a positive form of globalisation (European Commission 2006b:2). Differences between the two were presented as few and manageable (see e.g., European Commission 2006b:2; Barroso 2005; Council 2006e). The most pressing conflicts, discussed by Mandelson were related to trade in textile, and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) (Mandelson 2005a; 2005b; 2006a). These economic conflicts did not concern value differences. A strong partnership was represented as both desirable and possible in this period. The EU and China were represented as a *we*, separated from other less powerful political actors.

Engagement through dialogue

In the ‘partnership’ discourse, the EU focused on how it could promote its goals in China through bilateral dialogue and cooperation. The yearly bilateral EU-China Summit at ministerial level was presented as a good framework for contact (European Commission 2006b:10). The other regular, sectorial dialogues, and the strategic dialogue at Vice Foreign-Ministerial level, were additionally presented as valuable arenas for interaction with China (ibid.). The need for a strong contractual framework for the relationship was promoted, (Mandelson 2005a:5).

Dialogues were foremost stressed as valuable tools for the two, to share their views on international political and economic issues. Dialogues were promoted by the EU to facilitate discussions on topics such as international climate change cooperation, sustainable development in Africa and non-proliferation (European Commission 2006b:5, 6, 11). Furthermore, engagement in dialogues gave the EU an opportunity to share its thoughts on issues concerning Chinese politics and the bilateral relationship. The EU could promote issues that it perceived as important in the bilateral relationship, topics such as health and safety, migration, and combating organised crime, terrorism and corruption (ibid.:6, 9).

Disputed issues could also be dealt with through dialogues. Dialogues were explicitly seen as the key instrument in defending the EU's interests, e.g., in trade disputes. As stated in the Communication,

[t]he EU has a clear preference for resolving trade irritants with China through dialogue and negotiation. The existing EU-China trade related dialogues should be strengthened at all levels, their focus should be sharpened on facilitating trade and improving market access and their scope extended (European Commission 2006b:7).

Also when confronted with normative differences, dialogue was seen as a method for dealing with these issues. The Human Rights Dialogue (HRD) was pointed to by the Council, as well as by the Commission, as a valuable and appropriate way of dealing with normative conflicts, (see e.g., Council 2005a; 2005b; 2005i:17; European Commission 2006b:4).

Following these arguments for dialogue, some EU representatives stated a support of the termination of the imposed arms embargo on China. The arms embargo was initiated and imposed after the 1989 crackdown on the student protesters on Tiananmen Square. The embargo is not a traditional embargo, since it is not legally binding, and each EU member applies it differently. It is symbolic policy means, for both Chinese authorities and the EU, as it is not the main tool to regulate arms export to both China and other states (Sorroza 2011:3). The EU has rather used it to put norm pressure on China, and arguments of Chinese violations of human rights have been presented to legitimise the arms embargo (Shambaugh 2004:244).

This practice of continuing the arms embargo was questioned as the bonds between the EU and China improved, and China urged the EU to end the embargo (see e.g., Jianchao in China Daily 2005). In the 'partnership' discourse, the embargo was seen as contradicting the belief in dialogue and the desire for further development of the bilateral and global relationship. The arms embargo was represented as out-dated. An argument used by those in the EU in favour of terminating the embargo, was that by keeping the embargo, China was positioned in the same category as Zimbabwe, North Korea, Myanmar and Sudan (Stumbaum 2009:174). This did not fit well with the representation of China as an important partner to the EU, and a lifting seemed to be a prerequisite for the development of a strong partnership.

Widespread support of a termination of the embargo was expressed, e.g., by the High Representative for CFSP, Javier Solana, as well as the Commission and the Council, who all gave several statements signalling a desire to lift it (CNN 2005; Mandelson 2005a:5; Stumbaum 2009:167).

3.1.2 The 'norm concerning' discourse

The goal of promoting norm changes in China

The analysis of texts and speeches from 2005 and 2006 revealed another alternative discourse in the EU's foreign policy towards China. In this alternative discourse, concerns over several issues related to political and social rights in China were expressed, and engagement in these concerns was seen as the main goal of the EU towards China. The EU should encourage and support changes in China, and urge the Chinese government to enhance the human rights situation of its population and support several norms of importance to the EU. This discourse was strongly represented in the Parliament, but also the Council and the Commission represented this discourse occasionally in speeches and policy documents.

Concerns expressed by the EU illustrate which norms that were of importance to the EU, and what legitimised the EU goal of promoting changes within China. A quote that highlights key concerns of the EU is found in the Parliament's press release on the adopted resolution on Tibet in January 2005. The Parliament stated that

[t]he House calls once more on the Government of the People's Republic of China to stop its continued violation of the human rights of the Tibetan people and other minorities and to ensure that international standards of human rights and humanitarian law, as well as religious rights, are respected by it (European Parliament 2005a).

From this, several points can be made. First, it is evident that such an appeal for changes in the human rights situation in China has been made several times before. The Chinese violation of the human rights of the Tibetan people and other minorities had been on going, worrying the EU over a longer period of time. The EU also legitimised its criticism by referring to international standards, which should be norm and rule setting to all countries, including China. It is evident from the statement that the violations of human rights, and religious and minority rights in particular, was the source of concern. The concerns expressed by the EU demonstrate the goal of the EU to change Chinese behaviour, to prevent further violations of the norms.

Commissioner Siim Kallas⁷ also expressed concerns for minority rights, when he made a statement on behalf of Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner in the European Parliament in March

⁷ Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Administrative Affairs, Audit and Anti-Fraud.

2005. In his speech he discussed Tibet and the right to exercise religious freedom. He expressed concerns about religious suppression, and human rights and minority rights were both important issues addressed (Kallas 2005). His speech illustrates that the Commission and its Commissioners not only represented the 'partnership' discourse. Still, this speech was held in the Parliament, and it differs from most of the other speeches on China given by Commissioners, especially from those speeches given *in* China, which for the most part *did not* express these kinds of human rights concerns.

The Council further highlighted that China to a large extent should respect international laws and agreements. It expressed in 2005 strong concerns of aspects of China's policies, that it claimed contravened the intentions of the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and other international human rights legislation to which China was a party (Council 2005i:17). The Council also expressed concerns for the juridical system, restrictions on the freedom of expression, and the repression of minority groups in China, especially in Tibet and Xinjiang. Additionally, the Council criticised the widespread use of death penalty and the ill treatment of prisoners in China (*ibid.*). These concerns and condemnations illustrate that statements from the Council also represented this normative discourse, presenting it as a key goal of the EU to generate norm changes in China.

Concerns of the non-democratic governance in China and the promotion of democracy in China were also expressed (European Parliament 2005d). The Parliament also promoted peace. Peaceful solutions to internal Chinese conflicts were underlined, and the EU urged China to find peaceful solutions, to e.g., the Taiwan situation (European Parliament 2006b). The EU furthermore encouraged the Chinese government to commit to its growing international responsibilities, by engaging in the promoting of peace and peaceful conflict solutions (*ibid.*).

The need for a balanced economic growth was also highlighted by the Parliament, as well as a concern for income and development disparities in China (*ibid.*). Also, the EU underlined the need to secure economic and ecologic sustainable development in the trading relations between the two (*ibid.*; European Commission 2006b:6). As will be discussed in section 3.1.3, the EU promoted all of Manners' identified norms, and this foreign policy discourse in 2005 and 2006 therefore resembles Manners' 'Normative Power Europe' concept.

Norms of importance to the EU

In the ‘norm concerning’ discourse, the representation of China as a violator of several norms was central. The norm changes promoted by the EU were rooted in the idea that China consistently violated these. The perception of norm violations in China was the only argument put forward of why the goal of the EU should be to promote norms. The goal of making China change its behaviour related to these norms was thus not promoted to enhance the EU’s influence in global, strategic decisions or to enhance economic profits to the EU. This contrasts the goals promoted in the ‘partnership’ discourse. The criticism was not held back in order to secure a good relationship, as was a stated objective in the antagonistic ‘partnership’ discourse. On the contrary, the EU was not afraid of stating these values, and of calling for changes in China, even though this could potentially weaken the relationship between the EU and China. The promotion of the norms was thus close to the promotion of ‘milieu goals’, as the EU risked its good relationship with China by promoting them.

What this norm promotion illustrates is the utmost importance of the norms to the EU, especially in the Parliament. This is further illustrated when the EU in texts on the EU-China relations explicitly referred to its own treaties, in which the promotion of human rights is a stated objective (European Parliament 2005d). The importance of these norms to the EU was thus evident, and they were legitimating the requirement of an overall normative EU foreign policy towards China.

References to international law were further central in legitimising the critiques of China. When promoting human rights in China, the EU referred to international law and international agreements, and it urged China to ratify international agreements such as the ICCPR (see e.g., European Parliament 2005a, Council 2005i:17). The condemnation of the practices of the Chinese government, and the references to international rules and norms, demonstrate the EU idea that all states, including the EU, should behave in accordance with international norms and laws.

In the human rights discourse, China was constructed as different from the EU, as the ‘other’, with different and wrongful priorities regarding the norms important to the EU. A self-image of the EU as a norm promoter in global politics was furthermore visible. The large emphasis on norm enhancements in China was also constitutive of this self-image, as a strong voice for norm promotion underpinned the EU’s role as a global norm promoter.

Norm promotion through appeals and pressure

In the 'norm concerning' discourse, as in the 'partnership' discourse, dialogue was acknowledged as a means to promote human rights. The Parliament welcomed the EU-China Human Rights Dialogues (HEDs) as means to promote norm concerns (European Parliament 2005d). Still, the HEDs were not perceived as optimal, and a disappointment of the lack of substantial results from these was expressed (*ibid.*). While there were few references to the necessity of results from the dialogues in the 'partnership' discourse, the results were represented as important in the 'norm concerning' discourse. Without concrete results, the dialogues were not seen as sufficient policy means in use. Other forms of policy means were needed to supplement the dialogues.

The EU therefore emphasised that it should put pressure and urge for changes in China (see e.g., European Parliament 2005a; 2005c). This indicate that the EU should *tell* China how it should behave, and not necessary learn from and listen to the Chinese side. While urging and pressuring was promoted, it was not stated in this period that such pressure should be done outside the confines of international law. The importance of following international rules, and of regulating international affairs and the EU-China relationship, was instead highlighted.

The Parliament furthermore urged for a more comprehensive human rights approach, by including norm promotion in the trade relationship. In a resolution on the EU-China relationship, the Parliament stated that it

[r]egrets that increased trade and economic relations with China have brought about no substantial progress in the field of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which are basic components of the political dialogue between China and the EU [and] takes the view, in this respect, that the development of trade relations with China must go hand in hand with the development of a genuine, fruitful and effective political dialogue (European Parliament 2006b).

Hence, the trade relationship should to a larger extent be developed alongside political dialogues in which norms such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law could be addressed.

As part of putting pressure on China, some representatives of the EU campaigned for the continuity of the arms embargo. In this discourse, the human rights violations in China were used to legitimise the continuity of the embargo. The European Parliament was a strong agitator for the continued use of this diplomatic and economic tool in the EU's foreign policy

towards China. It expressed in April 2005 a concern for stronger support of a termination of the embargo within the Union (European Parliament 2005c). The Parliament recommended that the embargo should remain in place until China improved its human rights protection (ibid.). Also single MEPs, in written questions to the Council, expressed concern for the possible termination of the embargo due to continued human rights violations in China (see e.g., Claeys 2005; Vanhecke 2005). Pointing to Amnesty International's criticism of a termination of the embargo, MEP Vanhecke (2005) highlighted that human rights violations still occurred frequently in China.

The Chinese pressure to terminate the embargo, and the determination to end the embargo within other EU institutions, did not affect the overall support of the embargo in the Parliament. The human rights concerns were represented as more important to the EU than the need to meet China's request to secure a friendly environment for cooperation. This policy means was seen as an important way of expressing the EU's concerns. Furthermore, it sent a message that China should improve the human rights situation internally if the arms embargo was to be lifted. This normatively motivated use of an economic punishment, while preventing the EU of having a potentially larger trade income, can be regarded as the promotion of a 'milieu goal'. The EU risked losing financially and politically, but still considered the promotion of this goal as vital to its interests.

3.1.3 Normative discourse?

To assess the normativity of the discourses, I examine the presence of Manners' nine norms. Furthermore, I assess whether the objectives were sought pursued in ways that would not violate international law, as emphasised by Tocci. Lastly, I examine whether the goals can be defined as 'milieu goals', which Tocci and Forsberg both emphasise as normative goals, and thus is a central indicator of whether the discourses can be defined as normative.

The 'partnership' discourse was to a large extent 'non-normative'. The core norms presented by Manners (2002; 2008) were not central themes in the 'partnership' discourse, and were generally not essential to the EU when expressing the main goals. The subsidiary norms of Manners were to a larger extent addressed.

The core norms 'social freedom' and 'consensual democracy' were not addressed in this discourse. The core norm 'associative human rights' was not promoted actively, either. In the

few occasions in which human rights were discussed, the EU mainly referred to the value of the HRD. Further, China was urged by the Council (2005i:17) to change human rights practices due to international disapproval that could lead to reducing China's global influence, and thereby the EU's possibility to cooperate with China on these matters. Making changes should thus appeal to the Chinese leadership *not* because its people would benefit from better human rights protection, nor because 'human rights' was a key value that EU had an ethical or intrinsic duty of promoting. Rather, the Council legitimised the appeals for changes by referring to how China would be perceived from the outside (not inside). This way of arguing is closely related to the idea of China as an important actor on the global stage, where its reputation affects its potential for future global influence. This view did not give the impression of interfering in China's internal affairs, but rather indicated that the EU wished to have a strong China as a partner, allowing the two to continue their 'partnership' and be influential global powers.

Furthermore, the fourth core norm, 'sustainable peace', was addressed only to a limited extent, in relations to the promotion of global peace and security, where EU-Chinese cooperation was seen as necessary. The core norm 'supranational rule of law' was promoted, however. The EU promoted global rules, which were represented as binding to all parties, the EU included. The advocating of institutionalised dialogues is part of the idea of rule-based, regular and institutionalised international relations.

Some of the subsidiary norms presented by Manners (2002; 2008) were furthermore addressed to a larger extent in this discourse (see e.g., European Commission 2006b:3). Concerns for disparity problems in China, and focus on environmental cooperation and the EU-China climate change partnership were presented. The 'social solidarity' norm and the 'sustainable development' norm were therefore important topics. The 'good governance' norm was also addressed when the EU promoted multilateralism and greater global cooperation. Some of Manners' norms were thus present in this discourse. Still, the core norms did not have a central place in the EU's goals in the EU-China relations.

As the goal of developing a strong partnership with China, and the build-up of dialogues, cooperation and a stronger trade, were sought promoted within the confines of the law, the discourses is partly normative. Still, evaluation of the goals in light of the difference between 'milieu goals'; goals that do not profit the EU exclusively, that potentially also could reduce the political or economic influence and power of the EU, and the contrasting 'possession

goals', highlights that the discourse mainly concerns the promotion of interest-based goals. As the goal of forging a partnership with China mainly was legitimised by referring to economic and political gains, this makes the goals in which the EU pursued, mainly 'possession goals'.

Manners' core norms were largely absent from this discourse, and the goals were closer to the conceptualisation of 'possession goals' than 'milieu goals'. The discourse is therefore to a limited extent normative in character. The claim that the EU is always an inherent and consistent normative actor is proven invalid.

The alternative norm concerning discourse, in contrast to the 'partnership' discourse, was largely normative. First, several of the nine norms that Manners identifies in his thesis (2002; 2008) were dominating the human rights discourse in the EU. In this discourse, especially the rule of law, minority rights and the rights of free speech were promoted strongly by the EU (see e.g., Council 2005i; European Parliament 2005a; 2005c; 2005d). These are part of Manners' norms of 'associative human rights', 'inclusive equality' and 'social freedom'. 'Supranational rule of law' was also strongly promoted, in the many references to the importance of the ICCPR and international law (see e.g., Council 2005i, 2006e; European Parliament 2006b).

The core norms 'sustainable peace' and 'democracy' were furthermore promoted in the Parliament (European Parliament 2005d; 2006a). The concern for disparity challenges and the appeal for a balanced economic growth display the presence of the 'social solidarity' norm (European Parliament 2006b). The concern for growth problems, and the calls for ecological sustainable development show that also the norm of 'sustainable development' is present (ibid.). Lastly, the norm of 'good governance' was addressed, as the EU promotes a rule-based world order (see e.g., European Parliament 2005a). Still, the most predominant norms in this discourse are human rights, social freedom, supranational law and inclusive equality.

Secondly, the goal of pressuring China on norms was sought promoted without violating international law. Furthermore, the EU frequently referred to international law when arguing for their goals. The EU thus promoted multilateralism, and this contributes to the normativity of the discourse.

Finally, the goals in this discourse are close to the concept of ‘milieu goal’. The EU promoted goals that potentially could hurt the EU, as Chinese reactions to human rights pressure could result in declined economic and political cooperation, and thus reduced economic gains and political influence. Nevertheless, the EU called for stronger pressure on China through diplomacy and the continuation of the embargo. The norm concerning discourse can thus be defined as normative.

The normativity of the two discourses varied to a large extent. Especially related to the promoting of Manners’ core norms, the two discourses differed. The core norms were largely absent from the ‘partnership’ discourse, while they were the main norms promoted in the ‘norm concerning’ discourse. Further, in the Parliament’s statements and resolutions, concerns over human rights violations were the *main* theme in the texts (see e.g. European Parliament 2005a; 2005d; 2006c). In the Commission and Council statements, human rights violations were often only one among many themes, and the texts were mainly concerned with other issues, such as the development of dialogue, economic bonds and cooperation on global issues (see e.g., Barroso 2005; Council 2005i; European Commission 2006b; Mandelson 2005a; 2006b).

Expected practices

As it is was the ‘partnership’ discourse that was mostly represented within the EU, and especially by the actors with strong influence on the decision-making and implementation processes, the overall foreign policy discourse towards China can be labelled ‘non-normative’ in this period. This large absence of Manners’ core norms and the promotion of economic and political beneficial goals weaken the claim that the EU’s foreign policy is always strongly normative. The dominating ‘partnership’ discourse lead to the expectation of the use of dialogues to promote economic and strategic cooperation. Also a termination of the embargo could be expected. Still, the Parliament, and occasionally the Council and Commissioners, voiced strong normative concerns. These could lead to the expectation of human rights promotion in dialogues between the EU and China and through statements. In addition, a continued arms embargo could be expected from the ‘norm concerning’ discourse.

3.2 Practices: Engagement in dialogue rather than official pressure

While I in the previous section identified the main *goals* of the EU, I will identify the policy *means* applied by the EU by studying the practices. The study of practice implies to assess the regularly, commonly performed EU acts. Firstly, as discussed in section 1.2.2 on methodology, I analyse the policy means, foremost diplomatic, that were used in ‘two-way communication’. This includes instruments applied when the EU was in direct contact with China. Secondly, I analyse ‘one-way communication’ means, deployed by the EU to promote its goal towards China, while not being in direct contact with Chinese authorities.

To evaluate the normativity of the main practices as Manners, Tocci and Forsberg suggest, I analyse both what *type* of instrument has been used and *how* they have been used. First, the analysis of what types of means has been used is necessary to evaluate whether the means are normative *in kind*, according to Tocci’s conceptualisation. Furthermore, the examination of *how* the means are used contributes to the understanding of whether normative goals were actually promoted, and thus whether there was consistency between normative commitments and practises. Forsberg’s ‘normative means of power’ are relevant to examine how the means were used, and to what extent the EU promote normative goals through the policy means in use.

3.2.1 Two-way communication: Dialogues and cooperation

Normative means?

China and the EU formally established a political dialogue in 1994 (Men 2010:2). Since 1995, a human rights dialogue (HRD) has been ongoing between China and the EU (Kinzelbach and Thelle 2011), and in 1998 the two actors had their first ever Summit meeting, and agreed to hold Summits every year. The practice of engaging in dialogues with China to discuss global and bilateral issues was continued in 2005 and 2006.

Several dialogues and meetings were held between the EU and China in 2005 and 2006. The annual EU-China Summit and the annual Ministerial Troika meeting took place both years (European Commission 2010b). Furthermore, two HRDs were held each year, in addition to several sectorial dialogues related to e.g., economic issues, tourism and agriculture (ibid.).

In this period, the EU also further developed and institutionalised its dialogues with China. The EU and China decided to increase its dialogues and cooperation, which made the engagement between the two more frequent and more reliable. Several sectorial dialogues and cooperation was agreed upon. In February 2005, for example, a first China-EU Financial Dialogue was conducted (Council 2005g) and in December, the EU and China held their first ever EU-China Strategic Dialogue in London (European Commission 2010b).

On the EU-China Summit in 2006, the EU and China also agreed on the opening of negotiation of a new comprehensive framework agreement, called the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). This new agreement would cover all the existing parts of the bilateral relationship, in addition to increasing cooperation in political matters (Council 2006d:2).

Two new legal agreements between the EU and China were also signed in 2005 and 2006, both regulating trade (European Commission 2005a; European Commission 2006a). Several visits of influential political representative from the EU to China were furthermore conducted these two years, where Commissioners such as Barroso, Mandelson, Ferrero-Waldner all visited China and the Chinese Premier and the President also visited the EU.

These new agreements and dialogues highlight the fact that the EU pursued a stronger regulatory and formal framework of the cooperation between the two. Additionally, the agreements mainly concerned economic and strategic issues.

This practice of engaging in bilateral dialogues and the building of formal or informal agreements can be labelled a normative practice, as the means were of a non-military kind, and the appliance of these did not violate international laws. The formal economic agreements signed were also normative means, in the sense that they were promoted within the confines of the law, and contribute to a regulated interaction between the EU and China.

These ways of interaction furthermore originated from and can be understood within the discursive order, where dialogue, and sectorial cooperation as discussed, was key concepts in the 'partnership' discourse. The strong promotion of dialogue and enhancement of the partnership was thus followed in practice.

Tools of normative coercion?

To examine to what extent the means were used to promote normative goals that were promoted in the ‘norm concerning’ discourse, I study to what extent the EU used normative mechanism of power, as conceptualised by Forsberg and Manners. Were procedural instruments used, did the EU ‘live as example’ and did the EU use persuasion and strategic communication to promote normative goals?

The examination of whether the dialogues and agreements were used to promote normative goals, and thus whether the EU used normative mechanisms of power, shows that normative goals only to some extent were promoted. The dialogues carried out between the EU and China in this period concerned a multitude of topics, in which the EU and China considered cooperation and discussions beneficial. A large part concerned trade and strategic political issues. Only in the HRDs were the main topics of discussion normative, as they corresponded largely to the norms promoted in the ‘norm concerning’ discourse.

The practice of upgrading the dialogues and regulating the interaction by rules and regularity between the two, can be seen as using ‘procedural instruments’, which was highlighted by Manners’ (2002) as one way of promoting norms. It secured further dialogues, and can be understood within the EU idea that international politics and engagement should be regulated and rule-based. Still, the inclusion of normative clauses, enabling invoking of normative commitments, was not used in the agreements between the two. The EU could have included political clauses in the economic agreements or in other forms of legal agreements between the two, where the stipulations could be related to human rights, democracy or the rule of law. In the two legal agreements signed between the EU and China in this period, relating trade in textile, and tariffs, no such clauses are found (European Commission 2005a; European Commission 2006a). The potential of combining the bilateral economic agreement with promotion of normative goals was thus not used, and the request in the ‘norm concerning’ discourse of an overall normative approach, combining trade agreements and cooperation with human rights promoting, was not followed in practice.

Studying what the EU defined as the most important high-level meeting, the EU-China Summit, gives an indication of the *main* priorities of the EU in practice. In the joint statements presented in the aftermath of the Summits, it is possible to find what issues the EU

promoted towards China, and what it was able to agree on with China, as the statements present 'common' commitments.

The statements from 2005 and 2006 indicate that the same main issues were discussed each year at the Summits. In both meetings, international issues were addressed, such as environmental and energy challenges, world peace and security, WMD, commitments to WTO, the support of the UN and the need for a UN reform (Council 2005g; 2006d). The need to cooperation on these global issues was stressed. Further, the importance of bilateral trade cooperation was highlighted. To deepen and broaden trade and investments was a stated objective (Council 2005g:3). These issues correspond largely to the goals promoted in the 'partnership' discourse. The main topics were 'non-normative', such as development of trade and investments. Still the promotion of cooperation and multilateralism was evident.

Some normative goals were still promoted by the EU. Human rights were addressed once in both statements. China and the EU both stressed their commitment to promote and protect human rights, and stressed their continued appreciation of the HRD (Council 2005g:3; 2006d:3). Minority rights were also stated as a common commitment (ibid.). This indicates that the EU to some extent promoted normative goals, promoted in the 'norm concerning' discourse. Promotion of global rules and institutions such as the UN and WTO also show the 'living as example mechanism', in which the EU display the importance of international rule that should be followed by China, as well as the EU.

Strategic communication and pressure on some normative goals was thus used by the EU, and to some extent, the EU exerted influence on China, since China also stood behind the commitments in the statements. Still, Chinese dedication to these issues in practice cannot be confirmed, and not all of the EU norms, such as democracy and freedom of speech, were presented as common commitments. More often, however, the goals promoted and the commitments in which China also accounted for, corresponded to the 'partnership' discourse, rather than to the 'norm concerning' discourse.

Furthermore, the commitments made in the statements were not binding. The EU or China could not enforce compliance with these commitments, and the possibility for the EU to invoke normative commitments from the Summit meetings was thus not present.

When analysing the Human Rights Dialogues (HRDs), the EU's approach differed from both the EU-China Summits and the other sectorial dialogues and agreements. The main topic discussed corresponds to the norm concerns promoted in the 'norm concerning' discourse, and the EU used to a larger extent persuasion and strategic communication to promote normative goals.

Twice a year in 2005 and 2006, the EU and China participated in the HRD. In these meetings, the EU handed over a list of individuals whom the EU was concerned about. Concerns relating to the ratification of the ICCPR and legislative reforms were also discussed. The issue of minority rights in Tibet and Xinjiang was raised, and other issues raised by the EU were the use of death penalty, the need of reforms of the re-education through labour system (RTL), the use of torture, prisoners' rights, the need for independent judges and fair trials, the need for human rights considerations when countering terrorism, and cooperation with the UN and other organisations (Council 2005f:25; Council 2006c:18). These normative concerns were all issues that were central in the 'norm concerning' discourse. Hence, there was consistency between the goals found in that discourse and the practice of the EU in these HRDs.

I find the HRDs to be the most normative two-way communication practice of the EU in this period, as numerous normative concerns were brought up, and norm promotion was the main goal of the dialogues. The EU used the persuasion and strategic communication mechanism, with its representatives raising normative concerns and urging the Chinese government to change. The EU also referred to international laws, binding to the EU as well as others, and in this there is some evidence of the 'power of example' norm mechanism.

Still, the HRDs had limited impact on Chinese discourse. While the overall impact of these dialogues is hard to measure, the EU itself did explicitly express disappointment in the lack of influence after HRDs in this period. The EU highlighted that China would not give a clear timeline on the ratification process of the ICCPR. Further, relating to minorities concerns, the EU expressed frustration over the reaffirmed hard Chinese stance on minority rights, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet (Council 2007a:22). Furthermore, the discussions on prisoners' rights showed few common views (*ibid.*). This indicates limited normative EU influence on what China considered appropriate normative behaviour.

The US Ambassador to Beijing, Randt's comments on the second EU-China HRD in 2006 confirm the limited impact (Randt 2006). He stated that

Chinese officials denied that censorship exists, challenged the basis for some of UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Nowak's conclusions, said China probably will not ratify the ICCPR without making an exception to allow Reeducation-Through-Labor, and ascribed the September 30 shooting of Tibetans to "normal border guard behavior" (Randt 2006).

This statement illustrates that China did not express the same opinions on these normative issues as the EU, and that conflicts on these issues were increasing rather than decreasing. Still, the EU continued the dialogues and its normative pressure. The lack of concrete results, and indication of normative disagreements, did not lead to a cancellation of the dialogues. This is in line with the valuing of these dialogues as the means to promote norm concerns in the 'partnership' discourse. In the 'norm concerning' discourse, on the other hand, there were requests of concrete results from the dialogues if these were to be considered valuable. Furthermore, there were calls for a more comprehensive human rights approach.

As norm promotion was made almost exclusively through the HRDs in this period, excluded from most other communication forums, and the dialogues further did not lead to significant influence, this indicates that normative 'results' were not the main goal of the EU towards China. As trade and other cooperation areas were kept clear of human rights pressure, the continuity of these other cooperation areas seems to be even more important than normative results. The 'partnership' discourse, with its goals of a strong economic and political partnership, thus had a stronger constitutive impact on how the two-way diplomacy means of the EU were used in this period.

3.2.2 One-way communication: Statements and symbolic acts

Normative means?

Several statements and adopted texts concerning China were made in this period by the Presidency and by the Parliament. The adoption of resolutions and the official statements were all part of a one-way communicated diplomatic practice, where attempts of influence through pressure and international attention were made. As these acts were diplomatic, and clearly made in accordance with international law, the means can be defined as normative. Such means could potentially be used to promote normative goals.

The EU also decided not to terminate the embargo, even though support of such termination was widespread within the EU. Significant EU representatives argued for a lifting of the embargo. Moreover, lobby groups, mainly from the European defence industry, as well as EU member states such as France, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands, agitated for a lifting (Stumbaum 2009:170). In contrast to the increasing use of dialogues, this practice met opposition in China, and could possibly be an obstacle for the development of stronger political bonds between the two. Still, in the end, the Council decided to continue the embargo.

Whether the arms embargo can be seen as a normative means, differs according to different criteria of normative means. It does not violate international rules, and is thus according to Tocci a normative means. Additionally, the means is not military, which by many are seen as a 'non-normative' means. The means is however economic, since it regulate what the EU can sell to China, and Forsberg (2011:1194) separates between economic means and normative means. Thus by this standard it can be considered 'non-normative'.

Still, the continuity of the arms embargo did not harm the population of China the same way as would have a total trade-boycott or other strong restrictions on trade of necessary welfare goods. All in all, being an economic instrument, not violating international law, and not being an all-inclusive embargo, the embargo can primarily be defined as a normative means. Whether it was used to promote normative goals will be examined in the next section.

Tools of normative coercion?

Of the texts adopted by the Parliament on the EU-Chinese relations, concerns over norm violation were the main subjects raised. The Parliament adopted one text concerning general breeches of human rights in China, with a particular focus on freedom of religion (European Parliament 2005d) and another one on the general EU-China relation, where concern for several norm violations were expressed (European Parliament 2006b). The situation in Tibet was also a concern that was expressed through several adopted resolutions (see e.g., European Parliament 2005b; 2005e; 2006c). In these texts, Chinese authorities are called upon and urged to change behaviour. By communicating official condemnations and publically announce normative concerns, the texts can be seen as the use of strategic communication and pressure to promote normative goals. Impact of these resolutions was not directly apparent, however, neither in China, nor in the other influential institutions within the EU.

The Presidency, on the behalf of the EU, also made statements concerning China in this period. In March 2005, a declaration concerning the release of Rebiya Kadeer was presented (Council 2005c). In July, a declaration on Tibet was released, and in November, a declaration on the case of Wang Wanxing was made (Council 2005e; 2005h). In 2006, a declaration on the renewed direct talks between the Dalai Lama and Chinese authorities was presented as well a declaration on the release of Yu Dongyue and Xiao Yunliang (Council 2005d; 2006b).

While the themes in these statements concerns EU norms, I find great varieties in what was communicated, compared to the Parliament's adopted texts, and compared to subsequent statements from the Presidency in 2007, 2008 and 2009. Instead of putting pressure on China, and condemn its actions, these statements all *welcomes* Chinese acts. EU norms are observable in the statements, but not in a manner where China is condemned or asked to change its behaviour. The EU welcomed the early release of Rebiya Kadeer (Council 2005c), it welcomed the fourth and fifth round of talks between the Chinese government and the envoys of the Dalai Lama (Council 2005e; 2006a) and it welcomed the release of Wang Wanxing, and later, Yu Dongyue and of Xiao Yunliang, both on the EU list of individuals of concern (Council 2005h; 2006b).

While the Presidency, on the behalf of the Union, expressed some concerns for religious and cultural rights and appealed for the release of further prisoners on the EU list (Council 2005c; 2005h), these statements were *not* primarily aimed at pressuring China. Rather, these welcoming statements can be seen as support and appreciation of China. Such positive responses could encourage China to continue these ways of acting, but they also reassured China of a friendly and appreciating environment that facilitated for further development of the EU-China partnership. Normative goals were thus only to some extent promoted through these statements.

The maintenance of the arms embargo was also only partially motivated by norm pressure. Normative concerns were partly used as legitimising arguments as to why the arms embargo should be continued (see e.g., Claeys 2005; Vanhecke 2005). In arguments favouring this practice, Manners' norms were legitimising points. The Parliament stated that

(...) embargo should be maintained until (...) the People's Republic of China has taken concrete steps towards improving the human rights situation, inter alia by ratifying the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and by fully respecting the rights of minorities (European Parliament 2005a).

The embargo was thus used to pressure China to change, as only enhancement of the human rights situation in China could result in a termination of the embargo. In less explicit wordings, the Commission also underlined the necessity of norm changes in China prior to a termination (European Commission 2006b:11).

The continuity of the embargo thus suggests that not all of the EU's practices were constituted by the 'partnership' discourse. Even when the Parliament had no direct influence on the decision-making on this issue, their normative concerns were still influential when the Council decided not to continue the preparation of a lifting. Normative concerns grew in the EU institutions and in the member states, and ultimately influenced the decision of continuing the embargo (Stumbaum 2009:180).

Still, normative motivation and normative pressure were not the only reasons why the EU maintained the embargo. The idea of the EU as a significant global actor, central in the 'partnership' discourse, also affected this decision. What legitimised the need of a strong partnership with China was, among others, the global political role in which the EU could take in cooperation with China. This global role of the EU was secured by robust relationships to other significant actors, such as China. In this case, however, the EU jeopardised its good relationship with the US if it decided to lift the arms embargo. The US was strongly advising against a lifting, and the US anti-lifting campaign was voiced, among others, by Condoleezza Rice (The Guardian 2005). The US' pressure was described as ferocious by Financial Times (2005), and the message from the US was clear.

By being subject to strong US pressure, the EU had to decide whether to accommodate the US or China. Ultimately the EU followed the US' advise, indicating that the EU considered the relationship to the US as more important than the one to China. By choosing to respect the US' requests, and through this, continue the strong transatlantic relationship, the EU secured the likelihood of continued global impact. The self-image of the EU as a global power, cooperating with other powers to solve global challenges, was thus also a decisive factor when the EU decided to maintain the embargo.

3.2.3 Normative practices?

What the analysis of the practices show is that the EU mainly used diplomatic means, either by two-ways communication or by one-way statements or acts. The means applied were all

normative, assessing the normative by the broad conceptualisation of normative means by Tocci. The use of normative means were even more in use than one could expect from the dominating ‘partnership’ discourse, as the partly normative motivated embargo was continued, agitated for in the ‘norm concerning’ discourse.

What the analysis of *how* the means were used display is that the EU in some arenas, such as the HRD, promoted norms. Still, the EU could have used a broader strategy for promoting norms, through a more widespread use of strategic communications, the living as example, the invoking of norms and through stronger discourse influence (although the last is the mechanism in which the EU has the least control over). In agreements and dialogues on trade and other political issues, norm promotion could have been included. The potential of using dialogues and formal agreements, and unilateral statements and acts, to promote normative goals, was thus larger. While the means in use were normative, the application of these to promote normative goals was only limited. The use of narrow criteria to what is a normative practice leads to defining the practice as only partially normative.

3.3 Preliminary Conclusions

Two discourses are found in the EU in this period, concerning what the EU should promote and how it should act towards China. In the ‘partnership’ discourse, the EU’s main goal was to forge a strong political and economic partnership with China, securing the EU global influence and economic gains. The goals were largely interest-based, as these did not concern Manners’ norms, and as they were not ‘milieu goal’, a criterion of a normative goal. In the ‘norm concerning’ discourse, China was represented as a norm violator, and the EU’s main goal was to promote norm changes within China.

The ‘partnership’ discourse was stronger compared to the ‘norm concerning’ discourse. The ‘partnership’ discourse was strongly represented within the Commission and the Council. The ‘norm concerning’ discourse was represented strongly in the Parliament, but only to a limited extent by the Council and the Commission. As the former discourse was dominating, the overall normativity of the two discourses towards China was low. Economic and strategic political goals dominated in the EU's foreign policy in this period, expecting a practice of using dialogue and cooperation to promote a strengthened partnership and a termination of the embargo.

What the analysis of the practice displays is that the EU did engage in dialogue and further expanded the bilateral and global cooperation with China. The embargo, however, was not terminated, due to both strategic and normative considerations. The means in use by the EU were largely normative by Tocci's conceptualisation. Most means were of a diplomatic character and the use of these did not violate international law.

The study of *how* the means were used shows a different picture of the normativity of the practice. Only to some extent were the means used to promote norms. Mostly, the HRD was used as an arena for persuasion, and the Parliament's adopted texts also put pressure on China. The EU furthermore did refer to international laws, and acted as an example, on several occasions. Still, the EU did not pressure norms on China as strongly as it could have, through for example its official statements, in agreements or other dialogues. Influence on Chinese discourse from pressure and persuasion was also limited. Some influence in the negotiations of the joint statements in the Summits was evident, in the common commitment to multilateralism, peace and human rights expressed in these statements. The EU had some influence on China on Manners' subsidiary norms, and to some degree on human rights. But for the most part, there was no indication of impact on China of the EU promotion of democracy, freedom of speech and minority rights. The EU neither used the 'invoking of normative commitments' mechanism, and the potential of linking trade to norm promotion was thus unused. This shows that some of the normative means of power, conceptualised by Forsberg, were used, but the potential use of normative means of power to promote normative goals, was larger than what was witnessed in 2005 and 2006.

In the thesis of the EU as a normative actor, the EU is presumed to have normative goals and use normative means to promote these goals. What the main findings in this chapter show is that this is mainly *not* the case towards China. The EU foremost promoted interest-based 'possession goals' in this period, and while using normative means, these were only to a limited extent used to promote normative goals. Only when the EU decided to maintain the embargo norm concerns were expressed widely within the Union, the EU acted as a normative actor. Strategic considerations were also important in continuing this economic and symbolic practice. Furthermore, this was a rather small part of the overall discourse and practice of the EU, revealing that with mainly interest-based goals and mainly limited promotion of these in practice, the EU was an inconsistent normative actor in this period.

4 Increasing conflicts and normative concerns (2007 and 2008)

In this chapter, I study the discourses and practices of the EU in 2007 and 2008. Like in the previous chapter, two main discourses are identified. In spite of some changes, the discourses were to a large extent similar to the preceding period, as they centred on forging a partnership and promoting norm changes within China respectively. I highlight the similarities and differences of the discourses and practices, compared to the previous period, and assess the normativity of these. I conclude by discussing how the EU more often was a consistent normative actor in this period compared to 2005 and 2006.

4.1 Discourses: Revival of norms

Also in this period, two main discourses are identified. In this section I study which goals are promoted in the two discourses, and whether these differ from the goals promoted in the preceding period. Further, I examine how the EU represented the means through which their goals would be pursued. Finally, I discuss the normativity of the discourses, applying the conceptualisations of Manners, Tocci and Forsberg.

4.1.1 The 'partnership' discourse

Continuity in seeking a strong partnership

In 2007 and 2008, the EU still had a goal of forging a strong partnership with China, and the discourse centred on the partnership concept, which legitimised how the EU should act. Both a strategic and an economic partnership were presented as goals of the EU. This discourse was strongly represented in the Commission, and to some extent in the European Council.

Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner highlighted early in 2007 before her visit to Beijing how the EU valued its strategic partnership with China.

This strategic partnership is key to achieving progress in our goals, from global security to addressing climate change. Together we represent almost one third of the world's population. How we act, how we assume our responsibilities, and how we cooperate together, makes a difference to the whole planet. That is why it is so important

that we should work together, for a safer, more stable and peaceful world (Ferrero-Waldner in European Commission 2007b).

The EU sought a strategic partnership to further enhance its global influence. China was still perceived as an important global partner to the EU. Ferrero-Waldner suggested that the world's safety and stability relied on Chinese-European cooperation. China and the EU were presented as having a responsibility to secure a peaceful world. China was thus positioned *together* with the EU, as global powers with shared responsibilities and possibilities. The two partners were represented as equals, constituting a large share of the world population.

Commissioner Almunia⁸ further highlighted the importance of a strategic partnership in a speech in Beijing in September 2007 (Almunia 2007). The EU and China were described as major global players, and cooperation between the two was represented as necessary to manage global challenges (ibid.:4). Global peace was promoted as a shared responsibility (ibid.), a norm that also was promoted in the 'partnership' discourse in the previous period. Environmental concerns were also expressed, and the need for bilateral cooperation to address energy challenges, such as reduction of GHG, energy efficiency, renewables and low-emission, was stressed in the EU (European Council 2007; Mandelson 2008a). The goal of securing a strong 'strategic partnership' with China was thus still apparent, and this goal was still a 'possession' goal, rather than a 'milieu' goal, since it was described as being rewarding for the EU to engage in.

Furthermore, the EU promoted an economic partnership. The EU and China were both represented as crucial global economic actors, with a shared concern for stability and global growth (Almunia 2007:3). The EU and China both stood to gain from a well functioning global economy, which was described as "not a zero sum game, but a win-win situation for China, Europe and the wider world" by Almunia (ibid.:6). The economic rewards of cooperating to secure a functioning global economy were thus highlighted, as well as the importance of a bilateral trade relationship (see e.g., Almunia 2007; Barroso 2007; Mandelson 2007c).

The economic goals presented, and the legitimising context, were largely similar to the previous period. The EU portrayed China as a necessary economic partner, and the EU's main goal was to secure an economic rewarding partnership. As previous, this goal was a

⁸ Joaquín Almunia was the European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs.

‘possession goal’, rather than a ‘milieu goal’, as the EU consistently legitimised the partnership by referring to the economic rewards.

A weakening of the partnership goal

Still, the representation of China as the important global partner declined by the end of 2008, and the goal of developing a partnership was increasingly spoken of as a challenge. China was less often described as a necessary partner in addressing and solving global crises. The strong emphasis on China as a ‘strategic partner’, and on the wide scope of the partnership, was less discernible in speeches and texts towards the end of 2008. ‘Strategic Partnership’ was no longer a core concept.

The economic bilateral trade relationship, highlighted as important to the EU earlier in the period (see e.g. Ferrero-Waldner 2007a; Almunia 2007), was also increasingly described as difficult. China was criticised of hindering the possibility of developing the trade relationship. Prior to Mandelson’s visit to China in November 2007, the EU stated that “[a]lthough China has now been in the WTO for six years, EU exporters and investors continue to face persistent problems entering and operating in the Chinese market” (European Commission 2007d). He also commented on challenges related to IPR thefts (see e.g., Mandelson 2007b). His concerns about European access to the Chinese market and the problem of IPR thefts in China had not previously been stated as explicitly. These concerns serve as a turning point in the ‘partnership’ discourse, as at this point the problems were stressed more often than the positive trade achievements.

While an economic partnership was still perceived as the main objective, a discontent with the continuing economic disagreements with China was expressed by the Union, and it urged China to change its approach to the bilateral trade relationship (European Commission 2007d; Mandelson 2007b). “[T]he burden falls on China to show that the result will be action and not just words”, Mandelson argued (2007b).

Several texts displayed the growing impatience with China, and this impatience and frustration revealed a changed representation of China. Commenting on economic conflicts, Mandelson stated that “[w]hat we will do is treat China as a normal trading partner in the future, especially by enforcing rules where necessary” (Mandelson in European Commission 2007d). This emphasis on treating China as a normal partner, and by this, on enforcement of

rules and obligations, was further stressed by Mandelson in his speech in the US in November 2007, on confronting global challenges for the US and Europe (Mandelson 2007a). By treating China as any other global trade partner, the EU and the US should be “(...) expecting reciprocal openness, and enforcing obligations where they are not met” (ibid.).

This new way of a normalisation of China's position, and the stressing of stronger demands, lead to the construction of China as different from the EU, on a par with all of the EU's partners. The uniqueness of the two was played down. By saying ‘we will treat China’, China is no longer part of *we* at all times. There was thus a greater distance between the cooperative and rule-based EU and a China that denied market access to the EU, and played by its own rules. The EU was here represented as an actor wishing to pursue its foreign policy goals with respect for international rules and law. According to Tocci's broad conceptualisation of normative goal, the EU here can be seen as partly promoting normative goals.

Continued engagement through dialogue

Dialogue was still seen as the most productive tool to use in the relationship with China in the ‘partnership’ discourse. It is this way of interaction that would secure the objective of the EU to cooperate closely with China on economic and political issues. In the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) (European Commission 2007b) and in the China Country Strategy Paper (CSP) (European Commission 2007a), the use of dialogues was highlighted. Cooperation, dialogue, support and institutionalisation of interaction were seen as the best ways for the EU to reach its goals. The EU considered it in its interest to support Chinese sustainable development, and the dialogues and sectorial relations were promoted as important parts of the relationship, in which the EU could provide experience (European Commission 2007a:2). Barroso (2007:3) also emphasised dialogues and the increase in high-level meetings as reasons to be optimistic of the further development of the partnership.

Conflict solving through engagement in dialogues and meetings rather than through confrontational diplomacy was promoted by Ferrero-Waldner (2008). She stressed her strong belief “(...) in a partnership of equals in which we identify and pursue common interests and work constructively on areas where we don't see eye to eye, rather than engaging in ‘megaphone-diplomacy’ ” (ibid.:3). This shows a disapproval of the use of official statements and one-way communication diplomacy as a way of dealing with disputed issues.

On a few occasions, the EU-China HRD was referred to as a valuable tool for addressing human rights concerns (see e.g., Council 2007c:21). This focus on the HRDs also illustrates the overall support of non-confrontational policy means. Confirming the support of a non-confrontational policy line is also found in Mandelson's comments on the increasing criticism of China's policy towards Tibet, and the Chinese behaviour towards the protesters in March. He stated that

(...) some appear to assume that a course of direct confrontation in connection with the Olympics and Tibet serves our interests, and indeed Tibet's. But modern China presents us with a dilemma. Our concerns, our protest must go hand in hand with a strategy for ensuring that China continues to look outwards, to pursue internationalism (Mandelson 2008a:2).

While showing that concerns for human rights were spreading within the EU, and was addressed also by a Commissioner that consistently had represented the 'partnership' discourse, this statement also displays that the EU feared a less accessible China and therefore agitated for human rights approaches that would not lead to a Chinese withdrawal from global cooperation. This need for securing an 'out-looking' China, and thus refraining from offending it, fits into the EU identity of being a strong global actor, wishing to cooperate with other actors in order to find solutions to global challenges.

4.1.2 The 'norm concerning' discourse

Norm promotion - still a key objective

The 'norm concerning' discourse, in which the EU's main goal was to promote norm changes in China, is also identified in the EU foreign policy discourse in 2007 and 2008. There is a strong consistency in the central themes in this discourse compared to the earlier period, such as the concern for freedom of expression and for repression of minorities. This discourse was strongly represented by the Parliament, and also increasingly in the Council and in the Commission.

Concern expressed over repeated breaches of human rights in China, related to repression of religious and ethnic minorities, the use of death penalty, torture, forced labour, widespread censorship and repression of the right to free speech, illustrates which norms the EU would like China to respect (Council 2007c; European Parliament 2007b). The objective of making China ratify the ICCPR was also seen as a central goal (ibid.). Manners' core norms were thus

still central themes of this foreign policy discourse, and the concern for these legitimised the large focus on norm promoting towards China. The representation of China as a norm violator was constant in this discourse.

The Parliament strongly represented this discourse, expressing several normative concerns (see e.g. European Parliament 2007a; 2007b; 2008a). The Council also expressed normative concerns, and did to a larger extent represent this discourse in 2007 and 2008 than in the preceding period. In December 2007 the Council stated that it “ (...) remains seriously concerned about continued restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of religion, minority rights, re-education through labour system, torture and the extensive use of the death penalty” (Council 2007c:22). The Council thus promoted central norms identified by Manners.

The discourse was also represented by Commissioners in some speeches. Ferrero-Waldner (2007b:2) expressed in her speech in the European Parliament concerns for the human rights situation in China in general, especially for civil and political rights. Furthermore she addressed the limitations on freedom of expression and religion, and the lack of minority rights in Tibet and Xinjiang. Norms identified by Manners were here presented as key concerns to the Commission. The human rights situation for the minority population in Tibet and Xinjiang was explicitly mentioned as a concern. Ferrero-Waldner further urged the Chinese authorities to allow freedom of expression. This was explained by referring to history, where she stated that “[h]istory shows that allowing freedom of expression leads in the long-term to a far more stable society” (ibid.). The EU used its own history as an example of the right way of governing. China’s differentness was thereby emphasised. Ferrero-Waldner represented China as ‘an other’, violating norms central to the EU. In contrast, as discussed in the section on the ‘partnership’ discourse, in her speeches *in* China, China mostly was represented as being an equal partner with shared interests.

Increased concerns for Tibet

While Manners’ core norms continued to be central in this discourse and China was represented as norm-violating, one particular change in the discourse can be traced. Concerns for Tibet were stressed to a greater extent than what had been the case previously. Both the volume and the more specifically described concerns differ from the earlier more general concerns. The Parliament stated in December 2007 that it

[r]eiterates its concern over the reports of continuing human rights violations in Tibet and in the other provinces inhabited by Tibetan people, including torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, repression of religious freedom, arbitrary restrictions on free movement, and rehabilitation through labour camps (European Parliament 2007b).

The concerns for the Tibetan population were mainly relating to basic political and civil rights. The Parliament also called on the Chinese authorities to begin substantive negotiations with the Dalai Lama, and to considerate his demands for an autonomous Tibet. Furthermore, China was urged to stop pressuring and punishing states that had a friendly relation to the Dalai Lama (ibid.). After meetings between the Dalai Lama and European leaders, such as Angela Merkel in 2007 (BBC 2007), this included member states of the EU.

After the Tibetan uprising that started March 14th in Lhasa, which resulted in Chinese aggression towards the protesters, Tibet was even more in focus (Davis 2011:30-31). In the Council's replies to the written questions for the MEP Vanhecke in 2008 on Tibet, concerns regarding the situation in Tibet were expressed. The Council stated that

[a]s freedom of expression is one of the objectives that the Council set for its human rights dialogue with China in its conclusions of 2001 and 2004, the Council advocates further media freedom on a regular basis, in particular in Tibet, in its political dialogue meetings with the Chinese authorities (Council 2008h).

Addressing the limited freedom of expression, especially in Tibet, had been a long-time objective of the EU, the Council stated. The statement highlights how the Tibet issue was high on the political agenda in the EU in 2008. As mentioned above, the issue of Tibet was also brought up by Commissioner Mandelson in his speech to the *China-Britain Business Council*.

Mandelson's speech served as a turning point in the adherence to these normative concerns, in that the trade Commissioner brought up such a sensitive norm concern. Concerns for core norms of Manners had not earlier been addressed this explicitly by Commissioners. Not least, it was surprising that these concerns came from the Commissioner for trade. Still, Mandelson's thoughts on how to deal with the EU's concerns differed from the Parliament's and the Council's more confrontational statement line. Mandelson stated that "[o]ur challenge is to build and sustain a constructive working relationship with China that can address issues like trade barriers and Tibet, without coming off the tracks". Further, he argued, as discussed earlier, that direct confrontations was unproductive, because it could result in a less outward-looking China (Mandelson 2008a:2).

Still, all the main institutions in the EU brought up the concerns over the minority rights situation in Tibet. The EU did not shy away from engaging and calling on China to change its policy and practice towards Tibet and the Dalai Lama, an issue that China strongly consider as an internal matter (see e.g., Yu 2008b and Gang 2008d). The main goal of the EU related to Tibet was to promote changes in China's practice of violating norms of importance to the EU. Promoting this, without receiving economic or political rewards, makes this a 'milieu goal', and the foreign policy discourse was thus strongly normative.

Continued norm promotion through pressure and calls for changes

The thoughts on how the EU should promote norms in its relation with China were largely consistent with the previous period. While diplomacy was promoted as the way of addressing norm concerns, the HRD was still not considered as adequate (European Parliament 2007b). The Parliament called for an improvement of the HRD and continued to urge Chinese authorities to change its behaviour (ibid.). Furthermore, the EU called for a continuation of the arms embargo (ibid.).

The Parliament furthermore expressed discontent with the Commission's and the Council's overall approaches towards China, as in the preceding period, and called for a more comprehensive human rights approach. It stressed that "(...) democratic values and responsibility should constitute the fundamental basis of the relationship between the EU and China" (ibid.). The Parliament urged the EU institutions responsible for policy making and policy implementation towards China, to ensure coherence between human rights, on the one side, and trade and security on the other (ibid.). This could be done, the Parliament argued, if the EU ensured

(...) that an improved trading relationship with China was contingent upon human rights reforms, and [made] a comprehensive evaluation of the human rights situation before finalising any new Partnership and Cooperation Framework Agreement (PCFA) (European Parliament 2007b).

This call for a comprehensive approach was also evident in the MEP Peillon's written question to the Council. He asked whether the Council, together with the Commission were "(...) carrying out any initiatives to promote clearer inclusion of the need to respect human rights in international trade agreements, particularly with China" (Peillon 2008). The Council's answer to this question demonstrated that the Council would address norm concerns

in high-level talks, on visits and if appropriate, in statements. Still, the HRD and dialogues were primarily seen as a good opportunity to raise norm concerns (Council 2008b).

4.1.3 Normative discourse?

The normativity of the two discourses differed to a great extent. The ‘partnership’ discourse was largely ‘non-normative’, while the norm concerning discourse, as expected, still was a normative discourse. In total, therefore, the overall foreign policy discourse was more normative towards the end of 2008 than in previous years.

The normativity of the ‘partnership’ discourse increased moderately, as seen in the greater focus on international law. Expectations of compliance of rules and openness from China were not expressed in the previous period. In this period, the EU placed greater importance on the adherence to international rules. Manners’ core norms were still almost absent from this discourse. The norms sustainable development, peace and supranational law had some presence, while references to democracy, human rights and freedom of expression were lacking. While there was greater emphasis on promoting goals with respect to international law and rules, the main goal promoted was still interest-based ‘possession goal’. The goal of the EU was still mainly a partnership that was rewarding to the EU both in economical and political terms.

Even though there were strong reactions to the violence in Tibet and perceived norm violations there from the member states in the EU, especially in France (BBC News 2008), and in the alternative discourse within the EU, economic conflicts was the main concern addressed in this discourse. Furthermore, the economic conflicts were addressed precisely to secure the continuation of the economically beneficial partnership. This discourse was thus still mainly ‘non-normative’, as Manners’ norms were largely absent, and the goals to a large extent were ‘possession goals’.

Manners’ norms, in particular the core norms, had a central position in the alternative norm concerning discourse, and the promotion of these were, as previous, the main goal of the EU towards China. ‘Social freedom’, ‘inclusive equality’ and ‘associative human rights’, especially, were norms that the EU to a large extent promoted and defined as important to the EU. By setting the presence of Manners’ norms as the criterion for defining the discourse as normative, this discourse can still be defined as largely normative.

By the conceptualisation of Tocci and Forsberg, with emphasis on goals that are sought within the confines of the law and on 'milieu goals' versus 'possession goal', the discourse is also still largely normative. Diplomacy is underlined as a main instrument to promote norms. While calling for a more comprehensive human rights approach, there were no indications of doing this in ways that would violate international rules and standards. Further, there were no stated expectations of rewards to the EU of promoting norms. An even greater focus on Tibet was put in this period. This was a sensitive issue to China, which was promoted by the EU regardless of possible negative reactions from Chinese authorities. The discourse can therefore largely be seen as a normative discourse.

Expected practices

The norm concerning discourse was increasingly represented within the EU, at the same time as the 'partnership' discourse changed towards a representation of China as less important and necessary partner. The expectancy of normative practices is therefore greater in this period than in 2005 and 2006. This means that the EU to a larger extent would promote norms through its policy means. The use of diplomatic means in the engagement with China was promoted in both discourses, and is therefore expected to dominate the practice.

Since the Parliament emphasised the need for a more comprehensive approach relating to the addressing of human rights, a development of this could be a possible new turn in the EU's approach to China. This would indicate a stronger human rights focus in a larger part of the communication and engagement with China. As there were no major discussions on the lifting of the arms embargo in this period, and the Parliament continued to urge for maintenance, a continuing of the embargo is also expected.

A stronger 'norm concerning' discourse lead also to expectations of a larger use of statements and demarches, as the HRD was not seen as a sufficient tool to promote the norms. The growing concern for the situation in Tibet indicates that the EU would use normative policy means such as persuasion and strategic communication to a larger extent to impact Chinese authorities, on this matter. Still, as the statements of Ferrero-Waldner (2008) and Mandelson (2008a) show, there were also strong voices promoting dialogue and a non-confrontational line in how to engage in human rights promotion towards China.

The ‘partnership’ discourse was as discussed less dominant in this period. Still, it was represented by important actors within the EU. Therefore, the expectation from this discourse of a continuation of the yearly Summit, the other high-level political meetings, as well as the sectorial dialogues ranging from finance and agriculture, to the HRD could be met. Also, an increase in dialogues and formal frameworks for cooperation is expected, as this was part of the key goal of the EU, securing a comprehensive partnership with China. Lastly, it is to be expected that the EU would follow international rules and laws when engaging with China, as this was important in both discourses.

4.2 Practices: Pressure and confrontations

In the study of practices, I first analyse the two-ways communication practices, applied when EU and China engaged. Then, the unilateral policy means directed towards China, are examined. The normativity of these practices is further assessed applying the conceptualisations of Tocci and Forsberg. I study which policy means have been used and analyse how normative goals have been promoted.

4.2.1 Two-ways communication: Dialogues and cooperation

Normative means?

This period is characterised by a continuation of political and sectorial dialogues, and by an increase in dialogues and forums for discussion and exchange of opinions. Several meetings were held these two years, both high-level political meeting, meetings on economic cooperation and trade, and several sectorial meetings. Previously agreed meetings, such as the EU-China Strategic dialogues, the EU-China Civil Society Round Tables, HRDs, EC-China Joint Committee meetings, the EU-China Energy Conference and the EU-China Summit in Beijing, were continued (European Commission 2010b; 2012).

The establishment in 2007 of a High Level Economic and Trade dialogue signified further development of new and enhanced dialogues and cooperation. In this dialogue a meeting between the European Commission and the State Council of China at the level of Vice-Premier was planned. The main objective of this new dialogue was according to the EU and China discussions of “(...) strategies in EU-China trade, investment and economic

cooperation and coordinate bilateral projects, studies and develop plans in priority sectors” (Council 2007b:12). Commissioner for External Relations Ferrero-Waldner also visited Beijing in the beginning of 2007 to launch negotiations on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that was agreed on at the 2006 Summit (European Commission 2007d).

This use of dialogues can be seen as a normative means, in line with Tocci’s criteria, in which normative means are means used within the confines of international law. These acts, enhancing cooperation on economic and political matters, were mainly in accordance with the goals promoted in the ‘partnership’ discourse. Still, no formal agreement was signed between the two in this period. Furthermore, no EU-China Summit was held in 2008, as China cancelled this meeting close to the time when the meeting was supposed to be held. This cancellation was explained by referring to the Dalai Lama’s visit to many European countries at that time, and the EU president Sarkozy’s willingness to meet with the Dalai Lama (Gang 2008d). This illustrates that conflicts surfaced during the period, and the engagement in two-ways communication decreased throughout the period.

Tools of normative coercion?

The newly agreed cooperation projects, and the new dialogues between the EU and China, did to a large extent concern economic cooperation and other ‘non-normative’ sectorial matters. As previous, this way of institutionalising and regulating the interaction between the EU and China, can be seen as the use of ‘procedural instruments’, which by Manners is defined as a way of promoting norms. Still, no normative clauses were included in any of the agreements, and the potential for combining human rights promotion with other kinds of cooperation were not fulfilled.

New agreements between the two and a strong will to continue the political dialogue were highlighted in the Joint Statement, presented in the aftermath of the 2007 EU-China Summit (Council 2007b:3). Several commitments made in the statement concerned economic and strategic cooperation, and were thus motivated by the interest-based goals of the ‘partnership’ discourse. Still, China and the EU highlighted the support of a rule based international system (ibid.:5). Satisfaction with the start of the negotiations of the PCA was also expressed, and the need of an effective multilateral order was emphasised (ibid.:3,5). Furthermore, EU and China expressed commitments to stronger cooperation and dialogue on sustainable development, especially on climate change and environmental protection (ibid.:9). Like in 2006 a

commitment to human rights and minority rights was also stated (ibid.:3). Some normative commitment was thus evident indicating that the EU had used strategic communication and persuasion on normative issues. Furthermore the commitments indicate some EU influence on Manners' subsidiary norms.

On disputed normative issues, such as human rights, the EU also had some impact on China in 2007 as Chinese authorities accepted this statement where human rights were mentioned. Still, the section in which human rights were addressed was small compared to sections discussing other issues. Concrete issues, such as minority rights or commitment to democracy, were furthermore absent. A larger part of the Summit was used on agreements and discussions of economic and strategic cooperation.

These meetings and dialogues were furthermore not formalised into contracts in which compliance with the content of the agreements could be enforced. The EU had for example no available tools to force China to participate in an EU-China Summit in 2008. The invoking of normative commitments, emphasised by Forsberg (2011:1197) as a normative means of power, was therefore not in use.

In the HRDs, strategic communication to persuade China to comply with the normative goals was used. ICCPR ratification, reform of the RTL system, fair judicial system, freedom of expression and freedom of the press, and minority rights, especially in Tibet, were issues brought up (Council 2007a:21-22; 2008e:16; European Commission 2010a:156). Lists of individuals of concern were furthermore handed to China in each HRD (ibid.). Freedom of expression and the concern for activists such as Liu Xiaobo and Hu Jia were also brought to the table in 2008 (European Commission 2010a:156). The EU furthermore continued to follow the consequences of the events in Lhasa on 14 March 2008 (ibid:157).

Still, the impact of this practice seems limited. Commenting on the démarches on particular cases, the EU stated that

[i]n between dialogue sessions, démarches were carried out on particular cases of concern. Unfortunately the limited action of the Chinese government meant that very few individuals were released early and new names were added to the list of individual cases of concern in the course of the year (Council 2007a:22).

Attempts of persuasion relating to the different norms were thus made. Still, in the EU report on human rights of 2007 and 2008, no indications of succeeding with its argumentation were

mentioned. Rather, the EU stated that in the HRDs, the debate on Tibet was especially difficult. The disagreements continued as China retained its 'customary position' on Tibet and the role of the Dalai Lama (Council 2007a:22; 2008e:16).

The meetings illustrate that the EU continued to raise normative issues in dialogues, indicating that the increasing concern over Tibet resulted in addressing this in practice. The concerns were thus not only promoted through official statements. In these meetings the EU used strategic communication, but had a limited if any impact on Chinese discourse.

Confirming this lack of influence in the period of conflict, is the U.S. Mission to the European Union, Political Minister Counsellor Davis's note on the human rights dialogue. He stated that when the EU expressed its frustration with the shortage of response from China regarding the individual name list past to China in the end of 2008, China explained its unwillingness to respond by pointing to the 'bad atmosphere' caused by the cancellation of the Summit (Davis 2009). This displays the lack of influence EU asserted over China. It also shows how the cancellation of the EU-China Summit in 2008, and the following conflicts, had consequences for the HRD, as well as the high-level political relationship.

Even without influence, this practice can be seen as a strongly normative. Discourse influence was limited, but the EU used a diplomatic, legal way of promoting Manners' core norms. Persuasion and strategic communication to promote normative goals were still the main objectives of these dialogues.

4.2.2 One-way communication: Statements and symbolic acts

Normative means?

In 2008, the EU's use of one-way communication diplomacy changed from its previous practice. The sudden Chinese cancellation of the Summit and subsequent dispute between the two were results of a new way of diplomatic acting from the EU. An important representative of the EU chose to meet with the Dalai Lama. This decision was taken knowing that it would provoke Chinese authorities. Still, the meeting was agreed upon and later held. The European Parliament awarding of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to the Chinese political activist Hu Jia, also provoked the Chinese authorities but was given nonetheless. On the informal EU Foreign Minister Council in Slovakia 2008, the Tibet situation was discussed. In

addition, both the Parliament and the Presidency presented statements and adopted texts on China. The means in use can be called normative means, as they were conducted without violating international law, and they were largely of a diplomatic character.

Tools of normative coercion?

Nicolas Sarkozy, while holding the presidency of the EU the second half of 2008, expressed a wish to meet with the Dalai Lama in December 2008 (AFP 2008). Earlier, he had expressed his will to a meeting, but several times postponed it (New York Times 2008; China Post 2008). Sarkozy's earlier wishes to meet the Dalai had then resulted in negative verbal reactions from the Chinese authorities (New York Times 2008). Sarkozy's earlier threats to boycott the opening ceremony of the Olympic games unless the Chinese authorities demonstrated progress in improving the situation in Tibet, illustrate his will to use symbolic acts to pressure Chinese authorities (AFP 2008).

When announcing his intention of meeting the Dalai Lama, Sarkozy stated that he had great respect for the Dalai Lama and that "Tibetans should not be subjected to repression and, like everyone else, they have a right to freedom" (Sarkozy in AFP 2008). On December 6th, Sarkozy went through with the 30 minutes meeting (EU-Observer 2008). The French president was the first European leader to meet the Dalai Lama while holding the EU's rotating presidency (ibid.), and his determination of meet the Dalai Lama despite criticism from Chinese authorities, showed a support of the Dalai's cause and a will to influence China on this matter. This is in accordance with the stronger concerns for the human rights situation in Tibet expressed in the 'norm concerning' discourse. The support of freedom of speech and minority rights in Tibet exceeded the goal of securing a friendly environment in which the EU and China could develop its partnership.

The widespread attention paid to this meeting made the EU's Tibet concerns well known globally. This meeting was thus clearly a strategic way of communication the EU's message, and a way of seeking influence by putting pressure on China. Hence, the Presidency used the strategic communication mechanism, promoting normative goals.

The meeting and pressure did not, however, influence Chinese discourse on how Tibet and the Dalai's role was understood, or how the conflict should be solved. Several statements from Chinese authorities display a large degree of disapproval of this meeting, and a continuation

of a different view on the ways to deal with Tibet. In the official statement from the Chinese Foreign Ministry concerning Sarkozy's announcement to meet the Dalai, China stressed its disapproval of the Dalai's activities and what was referred to as his support of separatist activities (Gang 2008c). Furthermore, Chinese official statements on the meeting between the Dalai and Sarkozy, and on the cancellation of the Summit, stressed how the Tibet issue was related to Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity (Gang 2008d; Jianchao 2008). The wrongdoings of France and the EU 'grossly' interfered in Chinese internal affairs and hurt the Chinese people, it was claimed (Jianchao 2008).

While China urged the EU to support China's way of handling this issue and respect its sovereignty, Sarkozy did conduct the meeting, and was not swayed by the Chinese pressure. Instead, the EU expressed dissatisfaction with the Chinese decision to cancel the 2008 Summit. In a statement on this issue, the Presidency, on behalf of EU, highlighted the 'ambitious goals' it had set prior to the Summit, and it noted the decision of China 'with regret' (Council 2008d). The EU did not appreciate the Chinese decision of not wanting to participate, and it made no sense to the EU that China would cancel the Summit (EU informant 1, 2012 [interview]). The Chinese answer highlighted that China had been patient, and expressed a hope that France and the EU would handle the Tibet issue 'properly', so that the EU-China Summit could be held (Gang 2008d). Regrettably, the French side did not respond to the Chinese efforts to maintain a good relationship with both France and the EU. China therefore had to cancel the Summit (ibid.). While the EU put pressure on China by confronting China publicly, little influence was gained, and the relationship between the two was characterised by conflict by the end of 2008.

The European Parliament also promoted normative goals towards China through a symbolic act when it awarded the Sakharov Prize⁹ to Hu Jia, a Chinese political human rights activist (European Parliament 2008b). The president of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering argued that by awarding this prize to Hu Jia, the Parliament "(...) firmly and resolutely acknowledges the daily struggle for freedom of all Chinese human rights defenders" (ibid.). The motivation of this act was thus to support the human rights activism in China.

⁹ "The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought is awarded each year by the European Parliament. The prize was set up in 1988 to honour individuals or organisations for their efforts on behalf of human rights and fundamental freedoms" (The European Parliament 2012. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/002398d833/Sakharov-Prize-for-Freedom-of-Thought.html>)

The Parliament's act did not go unnoticed in Beijing. Foreign Ministry Spokesman Gang (2008b) made a statement where he described Hu Jia as a criminal, and criticised the Parliament's decision. He stated that

[s]ome individuals in the European Parliament award Hu Jia the "Sakharov Prize" under the pretext of "safeguarding human rights". This is a flat distortion of fact, and fully exposes their political attempt to grossly interfere in China's internal affairs and infringe upon China's judiciary sovereignty (Gang 2008b).

The award was thus seen by China as attempt to interfere in China's internal matters, and the act was highly disapproved of. The act was part of the Parliament's continued promotion of norms, and was constituted by the 'norm concerning' discourse. The Parliament used strategic communication and pressure to promote norms, although the influence on the Chinese discourse seemed limited.

On the informal EU Foreign Minister Council, which took place in Slovenia in March 2008, the ministers discussed the incidents in Tibet. This discussion displays the EU's increased normative concerns (Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008). While not explicitly pressuring China, concerns were expressed and noticed both outside and inside the Union. The meeting caused reactions in Beijing, and resulted in a Chinese statement that again highlighted Chinese sovereignty and the Chinese discontent with foreign interference regarding Tibet (Yu 2008a). Conducting this meeting and expressing concerns illustrate the use of strategic communication to promote normative goals. Still, discourse impact was limited.

The EU also made several statements and resolutions where the goal was the promotion of norms. The European Parliament continued to adopt resolutions and statements on Chinese internal human rights situation. The Presidency, on behalf of the EU, also continued to make statements concerning human rights in China and Tibet. These differed from the statements given by the Presidency in the preceding period, as the statements from 2007 and 2008 clearly were used to promote norm changes in China. Several statements were given and these were all given well aware that they provoked Chinese authorities, and could negatively affect the development of the political and economic partnership between the EU and China.

The two resolutions adopted in the European Parliament concerning Tibet, "Dialogue between the Chinese Government and Envoys of the Dalai Lama" and "Tibet" both expressed normative concerns over Tibet and violations of minority rights. While refraining from commenting on the former, Chinese authorities published a statement responding to the latter.

The Chinese authorities saw the resolution as interference in internal matters (Yu 2008b). The accusations against the Chinese government were called ‘irresponsible’ (ibid.). Furthermore, China called for a termination of the European Parliament’s ‘provocative and confrontational activities’, interfering in China’s domestic affairs (ibid.).

In addition four important declarations concerned with norm violations in China were given by the Presidency in 2008. In March the Presidency made a declaration on the Situation in Tibet, stressing the right of freedom of expression (Council 2008a). The Chinese Foreign Ministry responded and underlined that the protests in Tibet, in which the EU focused on, were ‘criminal act of violence’ (Gang 2008a). Less than two weeks later, the Presidency of the EU made another declaration on behalf of the EU, on the detention of Hu Jia and other Chinese Human Rights Defenders, again stressing the importance of freedom of expression, and human rights like freedom from arbitrary detention (Council 2008c).

In November, a declaration was made concerning the execution of Wo Weihan, who was charged of passing sensitive information to Taiwan (Washington Post 2008). Wo Weihan was executed on the last day of the EU-China HRD, where the EU explicitly had called on China not to conduct the execution and also expressed strong opposition to the use of death penalty (Council 2008f). China commented on this statement, arguing that Wo Weihan was a Chinese criminal, who had been convicted fairly, according to law, by the juridical authorities in China. In China’s view, this case completely fell within the judicial sovereignty of China (Gang 2008e). Furthermore, the EU was criticised of ‘grossly interfering’ in Chinese juridical administration, ‘trampling’ on the rule of law, and thus undermining the HRD (ibid.). The Chinese respond thus suggested that the official condemnation through statements did not influence the Chinese authorities, and that China preferred the HRD as arena for discussions on human rights and other sensitive normative topics.

The last declaration of the Presidency on China in 2008 was presented in December (Council 2008g). In this statement, concerning Charter 2008 and the arrest of human rights campaigners, the EU confirmed its strong commitment to the norms of freedom of expression and showed that the EU continued its use of official critical statements towards China, promoting norms such as freedom of expression and human rights, although Chinese authorities strongly opposed this kind of criticism from the EU (ibid.).

What is striking is how the EU promoted normative goals towards China at a time when the Chinese disapproval of such promotions was highly visible. This marks an important change in the EU's relation with China, compared with the previous period. The Parliament was no longer alone in its use of official statements promoting Manners' core norms through pressure and strategic communication. The Presidency, on behalf of the whole Union, made several statements on sensitive normative issues. The Chinese disapproval of these was visible in the many official responses.

While both Mandelson (2008a) and Ferrero-Waldner (2008) argued against such forms of verbal acts, there was an increase in a more confrontational line by the EU. Dialogues were not regarded as enough. This is especially evident in the case of the execution of Wo Weihan where China conducted the execution shortly after strong pressure from the EU in the HRD.

This change of practice by the EU can be seen as a turn towards a more normative practice, in that these statements and symbolic acts were promoting normative issues, and the EU thus used 'strategic communication' to a larger extent than previous. The norm promotion was a larger part of the EU foreign policy practice in 2008 than before, and the negative reactions from China in forms of statements did not lead to a halt in the use of normative statements. Still, even though the EU increased its norm promotion by using strategic communication, the Chinese responses, illustrate that the EU seem to have little impact on the Chinese discourse relating these disputed issues. Tibet in particular was seen as an internal Chinese matter.

These norm promotions through statements, adopted texts and other unilateral acts show that the 'norm concerning' discourse had a stronger constitutive impact on the practices of the EU, as the discourse favoured these kinds of norm promotion. The representatives of the 'partnership' discourse, on the other hand, condemned the use of 'megaphone diplomacy' and confrontational ways of promoting norms.

4.2.3 Normative practices?

What the analysis of practice shows is that the normative goals promoted in the 'norm concerning' discourse were increasingly promoted in the EU's practices. The use of diplomatic means continued to dominate also in this period, and the use of one-way communication to promote normative goals increased. In the beginning of the period, dialogues were the main arenas for the EU to promote its interests, which to a large extent

were similar to the goals identified in the ‘partnership’ discourse. During the period, however, fewer high political meetings were held and an increased number of official statements and other acts promoting normative goals were seen.

By applying Tocci’s conceptualisation of normative means, the practices of the EU all fall under the normative category. Goals were pursued in respect of international law. The means were mainly diplomatic, except for the embargo, that remained in place. Furthermore a large part of the dialogues, except for the HRDs and to some extent the Summit in 2007, were used to promote interest-based ‘possession goals’. Still, the increased use of statements and symbolic unilateral acts were mainly applied to promote and pressure China on Manners’ core norms. The large emphasis on global rules and EU norms, promoted through normative means, show the ‘power of example’ mechanism in use. ‘Persuasion and strategic communication’ was also very much in use in the one-way communicated diplomacy. Even so, the impact of the confrontational diplomatic acts did not change China’s opinion on these matters. Rather, the dialogue form of communications seemed to some extent to give the EU a greater influence, e.g., in the Summit. Still, the overall normative influence seemed low. Furthermore, the use of a comprehensive human rights approach, called for in the ‘norm concerning’ discourse, was not followed. Trade relations were mainly kept separately from norm promotion, and no normative commitments that could be enforced were included in any of the agreements. Overall, however, the normativity of the EU practice increased compared to the previous period, and the intensified attention on the norm violations in Tibet in the ‘norm concerning’ discourse constituted for a greater promotion of human rights in Tibet in practice.

4.3 Preliminary Conclusions

The two main discourses that were identified in the EU's foreign policy towards China in 2005 and 2006 were also strongly present in the period of 2007 and 2008. The goals in the two discourses were mainly consistent with the preceding period. In the ‘partnership’ discourse, the EU considered it as rewarding to engage in cooperation with China on global challenges, such as climate change, but also to engage bilaterally due to the economic gains to both the EU and China. In the antagonistic ‘norm concerning’ discourse, the EU’s main goal was to promote changes in China’s internal policies. Manners’ norms were key issues, and the goal of promoting norms was not proposed to ensure an economic or political gain to the EU. This discourse was thus still evidently normative to a great extent.

The increased concern for the minority population of Tibet in the ‘norm concerning’ discourse did not reduce the normativity of the discourse. On the contrary, this change only highlighted how minority rights were important. Some changes also occurred within the ‘partnership’ discourse, compared to the previous period. Conflicted issues were addressed more often. The rule of law was more frequently referred to, and China was not represented as equal to the EU in every case. These changes result in a somewhat more normative discourse. Nevertheless, Manners’ core norms were not central issues in the discourse, and the need for cooperation and partnership was explained by referring to the economic or political gains for the EU. The ‘partnership’ discourse can therefore still mainly be seen as ‘non-normative’.

Since the ‘norm concerning’ discourse was increasingly represented within the EU, and the construct of China as an equal partner faded in the ‘partnership’ discourse, a practice that promotes normative goals to a larger extent, through both dialogues and other instruments that could put pressure on China, was expected. The analysis of the practice shows that this expectation increasingly was met. Dialogues were used to a large extent, yet still more often to promote interest-based goals than normative ones. The HRDs, however, were used exclusively to promote norms. Other diplomatic acts, used in a unilateral way, such as statements and meetings within the EU, displayed widespread and strong norm pressure.

Discourse influence was still limited, and the great normative pressure created a confrontational environment between the EU and China. Especially towards the end of 2008, the normative tension between the two increased, and the Tibet issue stood out as an issue where the EU’s massive effort to influence China failed the most. No possibilities of invoking normative commitments were made available in the political agreements. Furthermore, the call for a more comprehensive approach to promote norms, linking trade and norm promotion, was not followed up.

While not all of the normative means of power identified by Forsberg were used, a large increase in the use of strategic communication was seen, highlighting the increased constitutive impact of the ‘norm concerning’ discourse. The EU was in 2008 close to being a consistent normative actor, especially when compared to the previous period. When the EU both expressed normative concerns within the Union, and strongly promoted these norms in statements, meetings and through other symbolic, diplomatic acts, there were to a large extent consistency between the normative goals and a normative practice. Still, the presence of the

'non-normative' discourse and the potentially greater use of the mechanism of normative power promoted by Forsberg, demonstrate that the EU could have been an *even* stronger and more consistent normative actor. As discussed earlier however, the Chinese negative reactions, and the EU's will to secure benefits from the cooperation with China, highlights that much was at stake when promoting norms. In the last half of 2008, the norm promotion was strong, which thus illustrates that the EU in this period often acted normatively, even when fearing Chinese reactions.

5 Back to the forging of a strong economic partnership (2009)

In this chapter, the leading foreign policy discourses and the practices of the EU towards China in 2009 are analysed. As in the preceding periods, two main policy discourses are identified in the EU, and the goals and the normativity of these are examined. In the second part of the chapter, I analyse the policy practices of the EU, and examine to what degree these practices were of a normative character. I conclude by discussing how the importance of economic cooperation increased in this period, resulting in a less represented normative discourse, and an inconsistent policy practice of the EU.

5.1 Discourses: The need for an economic partnership

Also in this period, two main discourses are uncovered. In this section, I examine the main goals, the ways in which these should be pursued, and whether changes in the discourses, compared to previous periods, are evident. The discourses identified resemble the two discourses in the previous periods, as global and bilateral economic and political cooperation were key goals presented in the first, and promotion of several norm changes within China was the main goal in the latter. Lastly I discuss the normativity of the discourses.

5.1.1 The 'partnership' discourse

A strong partnership back on the agenda

In 2009, the goal of forging a partnership with China re-emerged in the EU, and in the Commission in particular. The EU again presented China as a necessary and equal partner. A strong will to secure a strong economic and political relationship was stressed by the EU. The representation of China and the main goals of the discourse resembled how the EU represented the partnership goal in 2005 and 2006

Under the Chinese Premier's visit to Europe in January 2009, Barroso underlined how important the Commission and the rest of the EU considered a strengthening of the already existing bonds between the EU and China (Barroso in Commission 2009a). China was in

particular invited to cooperate with the EU to address two global challenges; to overcome the economic and financial crisis, and to reach a global agreement on climate change in the Copenhagen climate change conference (ibid.). The complexity of global challenges was further used as an argument for closer political bonds to China. Ferrero-Waldner (2009:2) highlighted the interconnectedness between security, economy and environmental challenges, and underlined China's role as one of the EU's most important partners in meeting these challenges (ibid.). China was, as in 2005 to 2006, again seen as a vital partner to the EU in addressing challenges.

The EU term 'strategic partnership' also re-emerged in speeches and policy documents. The term was again used to describe the political relationship between the EU and China. While the term was largely absent in 2008, it reappeared as an important goal of the EU in 2009. The partnership between the two should, according to Ferrero-Waldner (ibid.), be "(...) based on economic interests, equality and mutual respect, and where possible shared values". A 'strategic partnership' was thus presented as possible to achieve, in contrast to the previous period, when the strength of this bond was questioned. Also evident from that phrase 'where possible shared values' is that there were no expectations of a fully shared set of values as necessary to forge strong bonds with China. This acknowledgement stands in contrast to the long-term request from the Parliament of shared democratic values as a fundamental basis in the EU-China relationship.

China was thus increasingly being represented as an equal partner to the EU, similar to representation in 2005 and 2006. Ferrero-Waldner (ibid.) underlined that the world was witnessing a 'peaceful rise' of two significant foreign policy actors. China and the EU shared an understanding of peace and security as two preconditions for a sustainable development, and development and poverty eradication as necessary to secure sustainable peace (ibid.). The EU thus stressed the important political position of both actors, and that the securing of world peace and development required the involvement of the two. The wording 'peaceful rise' further demonstrated the EU's will to express itself in terms that were widely used in China.

While the Commission primarily represented this discourse, the European Council and the Council of the European Union also highlighted the importance of a partnership with China. In the European Council in July, China was represented as an important climate partner (European Council 2009). The Foreign Affairs Council also presented China as a vital partner in Operation Atalanta, a military operation on piracy on the coast of Somalia (Council 2009e).

Still, the EU-Chinese relationship was not a key issue in the Council in 2009, and only some comments were given on the EU-Chinese relationship.

In greater need of a an economic partnership

While the EU increasingly stressed China's importance in solving global challenges, the main focus in this period was on economic cooperation, and on the economic gains that the EU could achieve by cooperating closely with China. The global economic and financial crisis was used to legitimise and explain why the EU and China needed to strengthen their bonds, both in global and bilateral cooperation. The crisis was thus a new point of legitimation for the goals.

As early as in January, Barroso expressed the need to cooperate closely with China to solve the economic crisis. When the Chinese Premier visited the EU, Barroso stated that

[t]his visit was a good opportunity to reinforce EU-China relations and gave an impulse to our bilateral cooperation as well as our activities in facing the current global challenges like the international economic and financial crisis (Barroso in Commission 2009a).

The visit was thus an opportunity to repair the damages after the period of hostility in 2008, and it was an opportunity to develop stronger economic cooperation in which both had an interest. Furthermore, the impact of the financial crisis, and solutions to how the EU and China could cooperate to prevent a deepening of the crisis, were timely issues to discuss during the visit (Commission 2009a). The financial crisis was a reminder of the interdependence between the EU and China and the need to address the crisis together (Ferrero-Waldner 2009:4).

The economic focus also exceeded the focus on strategic and political cooperation. While Trade Commissioner Mandelson in 2005 and 2006 promoted the political bonds between the EU and China (see e.g., Mandelson 2005a), Trade Commissioner Ashton in 2009 talked almost exclusively about economic cooperation and the need for a strengthening of bilateral and global economic bonds (see e.g., Ashton 2009a; Ashton 2009b; Ashton 2009c). Furthermore, in dialogues *not* concerning economic issues and trade, the economic focus still exceeded the political. The economic crisis was for example a central topic in Ferrero-Waldner's speech discussing the strategic dialogue (Ferrero-Waldner 2009). Unlike in the

earlier periods, political power had a less prominent place on the agenda than economic power in 2009.

As economic gains were represented as a vital result of the partnership, the goal of a partnership was evidently a 'possession goal'. While stating that the bilateral trade relation already was worth over EUR 300 billion a year, Trade Commissioner Ashton argued that the EU was hoping for greater efforts to boost the EU-China investments from both sides and for solutions to unresolved issues, in order to secure a strengthening of the bilateral trade relations between the two (European Commission 2009d; 2009e). In relation to raw material competition, the EU highlighted that a solution to this challenge was necessary in order to give European companies a larger advantage (see e.g., European Commission 2009c). The EU had raised concerns over export restriction several times, and the restrictions on raw materials had given Chinese companies unjust advantages (ibid.). The prospects of economic gains were presented as the reason why China and EU should solve its conflicts and cooperate closely. The goal of the EU was thus strongly an interest-based 'possession goal'.

While the 'partnership' discourse in 2008 primarily concerned Chinese openness and rule following, Ashton's approach to conflicts and solutions in 2009 was rather different. She emphasised the need for trust and understanding to solve conflicts. In a speech in Beijing she argued that solving the economic conflicts between the two required 'mutual trust, cooperation and understanding' (Ashton 2009c:3). The High Level Economic Trade Dialogue (HED), which was initiated by Wen Jiabao in 2007, provided for the creation of a friendly and trustful environment (ibid.:3). This way of approaching conflict, with mutual trust and consultations as the preferred conflict solution mechanism differs from the more confrontational line earlier.

Engagement through dialogues and institutionalised cooperation

Resembling the discourse in 2005 and 2006, dialogue and regulated consultant mechanism was promoted as the most rewarding way of dealing with China also in this period. Barroso stated in January that

The year of the Ox, which represents hard-work and patience, started this week and is a very appropriate opportunity to make progress in our ongoing bilateral negotiations on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, to strengthen our dialogue on political

and human rights issues, as a way of improving mutual understanding, and to achieve further successes in our bilateral cooperation (Barroso in Commission 2009a).

His highlighting of the negotiations of the PCA and other dialogues as means to further develop the bilateral cooperation shows that the EU wished to use diplomacy and non-confrontational policy means towards China. The reference to the Chinese calendar, and the emphasis on dialogue and mutual understanding display a less confrontational line and less estrangement from China than in the previous period.

The EU further highlighted that common institution in the EU-China cooperation was one of the most effective means of the EU (see e.g., Ferrero-Waldner 2009:3). Institutionalised cooperation, defined by Manners as ‘procedural diffusion’, was thus explicitly promoted. The EU expressed large confidence in the HED. Ashton stated that the HED quickly had become “(...) one of the major avenues to deepen our partnership and build mutual confidence” (Ashton 2009b:3). The HED was further an arena for tackling trade and investment disagreements (ibid.). While the strategic dialogue was emphasised as an important arena for high-level dialogues earlier (see e.g., Council 2005g:2; 2006d:1; European Commission 2006b:10), the necessity of the HED and other economic consultations was represented as crucial in this discourse in 2009.

5.1.2 The ‘norm concerning’ discourse

Norm promoting a key objective due to normative violations in China

The ‘norm concerning’ discourse was also represented within the EU in 2009. Still, it was less prevalent than in 2008. The Parliament continued to promote norms and urge for norm changes in China. The Council also continued to express some normative concerns and therefore sometimes represented this discourse. Still, the concerns were expressed more strongly in the previous period. The Commission, which in the previous period expressed some normative concerns, did *not* represent this discourse in 2009.

The main themes and argumentation for goals in this discourse were quite similar to the previous period. The Parliament continued to express concerns for human rights violations in China in 2009, and freedom of expression and minority rights continued to be central issues. The Parliament expressed grave concerns for China’s unwillingness to ensure its population basic rights and freedoms (European Parliament 2009a). The Parliament also stressed that the

promises from Chinese authorities of improvements regarding human rights, given before the Olympic games in 2008, were not followed (European Parliament 2009c). Human rights and freedoms were main themes in this discourse. Hence, Manners' core norms were key concerns. The Parliament also continued to express concerns over the Chinese behaviour against Tibetans following the protests in March 2008 (ibid.). The minority rights norm was thus still of large importance.

Other main concerns of the EU, expressed in the Parliament's annual report in Human rights in the World 2008, was China's lack of ratification of the ICCPR, the fate of Chinese dissidents (such as Hu Jia and Liu Xiaobo), the legal system and politically motivated interference, and censorship of the internet (ibid.). The Foreign Affairs Council also represented this discourse, when it expressed that it continued

(...) to have serious concerns about the human rights situation in China and deplores the fact that there has been very little progress in a number of areas of concern, which include the rule of law, the regulation of the legal profession, freedom of expression, association and religion or belief, as well as the rights of persons belonging to minorities and the continued and extensive use of the death penalty (Council 2009g:6).

The Council and the Parliament expressed concerns for freedoms, international law, a fair justice system and the repression of minorities. The urging for changes related to these norms, that are all part of Manners identified norms, shows that the EU in this discourse follows the criteria of being a Normative Power Europe.

China was, as previous, largely represented as a norm violator, different from the norm following EU and the norm promotion was still a 'milieu goal', as the norms are promoted without references to personal gains.

Larger concerns for Xinjiang

A change within the discourse can be seen in the increased concern for the Xinjiang province in China, where Uyghur minority groups protested against Chinese discrimination. The Parliament called

“(...) on the Chinese authorities to make every effort to develop a genuine Han-Uyghur dialogue, to adopt more inclusive and comprehensive economic policies in Xinjiang aimed at strengthening local ownership, and to protect the cultural identity of the Uyghur population (European Parliament 2009f).

Inclusiveness and protection of cultural identity of the minority population in Xinjiang was thus called upon. Furthermore, to ensure the Uyghur minority a peaceful coexistence with the Han majority of the Chinese population, the Parliament called for a respectful and frank dialogue (ibid.). This concern also emanates from the norm of ‘inclusive equality’, where discrimination against religious or cultural minorities is resented. Hence, the concern is in accordance with the Normative Power Europe conceptualisation of Manners.

Furthermore, the calls for changes in Chinese behaviour towards Uyghur minorities were made even though this did not benefit the EU in terms of economic or political rewards. The EU could further risk Chinese reactions to such calls, as witnessed in the previous period related to the EU’s involvement in the Tibet issue. This illustrates that the promotion of minority rights and peace were ‘milieu goals’.

Communication through diplomacy and pressure

A continuing belief in diplomacy was evident in 2009. The Parliament expressed a hope for the planned EU-China Summit in the first half of 2009 to be an opportunity to make progress in all cooperation areas (European Parliament 2009a). Dialogue was promoted as an important part of the EU-China relationship, as well as a mechanism of conflict solving within China (see e.g., European Parliament 2009f). Still, an improvement of the human rights dialogue was, like earlier, also called upon. The Parliament expressed the need for “(...) a radical intensification and rethinking of the European Union-China human rights dialogue” (European Parliament 2009c).

A demand for a closer focus on Tibet and Xinjiang from all the institutions in the EU was also evident. The Parliament called for example on the Council Presidency to adopt a declaration on Tibet, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the exile of the Dalai Lama, calling for a constructive dialogue between the Dalai Lama and China (European Parliament 2009b).

Representatives of this discourse had long agitated for the use of the arms embargo. In this period, however, upholding the arms embargo was not a central theme in the adopted Parliament resolution on China, or other EU official documents. The Committee on Foreign Affairs mentioned the embargo in a report in July 2009. It stressed “(...) the need to avoid premature EU moves to lift the arms embargo imposed on China by the EU, the US and others” (European Parliament 2009d). Still, the large absence of promotion of the arms

embargo represents a change within the ‘norm concerning’ discourse, compared to the previous two periods. This could indicate that the general debate in the EU on the embargo was low. Hence, there was no need for arguing for continuity. It could, however, also indicate a decrease in the support of the embargo, in a larger part of the EU.

5.1.3 Normative discourse?

As earlier, the two main discourses identified differed largely in normativity. Manners’ norms were largely absent from the ‘partnership’ discourse, except for the concern for global peace, the environment and global cooperation. These concerns represent the norm of ‘sustainable peace’, ‘sustainable development’ and ‘good governance’. Still, the other NPE norms were absent. The focus on international law in 2007 and 2008 was not as large in 2009. Norms such as human rights, freedom of speech, and minority rights, were absent in this foreign policy discourse. The conflicts addressed by the representatives of the discourse were all of an economic character, and presented and given attention to secure the EU an overall larger income.

Dominating the discourse was the goal of forging strong economic bonds to China to achieve larger economic profit and this goal was largely a ‘possession goal’. The pursuit of this was sought through engagement in dialogues and diplomacy, which are normative means. Still, as the goals pursued were ‘possession goals’ rather than ‘milieu goals’, this discourse was largely concerned with interest-based goals.

As previously were Manners’ core norms main themes in the ‘norm concerning’ discourse. The changes seen within the discourse, towards a stronger concern for the Xinjiang conflict did not change this, as this concern addressed the ‘inclusive equality’ norm, where the equality among cultures is promoted. The promotion of norms such as social freedom, associative human rights, and supranational law, were important goals.

These were furthermore sought promoted through the use of diplomacy and pursued without violating international law. The decreased focus on the arms embargo demonstrated an even stronger agitating for the use of diplomacy instead of economic policy tools. Still, the norms were mainly to be promoted through one-way communication diplomacy tools, as the calls for official Presidency statements and for reforms of the HRD illustrate.

Lastly, the goal of promoting norms in which the EU would not profit from, in economic and political terms, and that simultaneously provoked Chinese authorities was a ‘milieu goal’. The discourse was, as earlier, largely normative, following Forsberg, Tocci and Manners’ conceptualisations.

The two main discourses were even more divided on normativity than before. In the ‘partnership’ discourse economic cooperation was promoted by the EU, and to some extent, strategic cooperation. Furthermore, there was expressed acceptance of norm differences between the EU and China, and an increased emphasis was put on mutual respect, compared to previously. In the alternative, ‘norm concerning’ discourse, the EU did *not* express acceptance of norm differences, but rather continued to argue for stronger norm pressure towards China. The changes seen within the two discourses, respectively towards a larger emphasis on the goal of forging an economic partnership in the former, and the increase in promoting norms in relations to concerns for Xinjiang in the latter, all reinforced the antagonism between the two discourses related to the importance and the promotion of norms.

While the discourses in 2008 to some extent *both* were becoming more normative, this changed in 2009, when the two discourses to a larger extent differed in normativity. Still, the overall focus on China and on the EU-China relation, decreased within the EU. Mainly, Commissioners, the Presidency and the European Parliament engaged in these issues. The Council of the European Union and the European Council only occasionally presented policies on China, and these were divided between representing the ‘norm concerning’ discourse and the ‘partnership’ discourse.

Expected practices

The expected practices of the EU towards China thus diverge. Still, the ‘partnership’ discourse was represented somewhat more widely, and by more influential actors in the conduction and decision-making in the EU, compared to the ‘norm concerning’ discourse. From the ‘partnership’ discourse, an increase in the use of dialogues and the build-up of agreements is expected. The new economic focus leads to the expectation of a continuation and build-up of economic agreements and meetings. This expectation also arises due to the Commission’s larger role in the economic cooperation between the EU and China. The promotion of economic and strategic cooperation through dialogue and agreements should thus be the main expected practice.

Still, the Parliament, but also the Council at times, represented the ‘norm concerning’ discourse, and a stronger condemnation of China, especially related to its behaviour in Xinjiang is expected by this discourse. The Parliament explicitly asked for the use of statements by the Presidency to pressure China on normative goals, and for an intensification of the human rights dialogue.

5.2 Practices: Institutionalisation of dialogues and decreasing norm promotion

In analysing the practices of the EU, I first analyse the policy means that were employed when engaging with China. These two-ways communication tools were increasingly in use in this period. Secondly the one-way communication tools are analysed. I assess the normativity by analysing what kinds of means were used, and how these were applied to promote normative goals.

5.2.1 Two-way communication: Dialogues and cooperation

Normative means?

The EU increased its high-level meetings with China and agreed on many new cooperation projects where dialogue was a main component. Wen Jiabao visited Europe in January on what Chinese authorities called the ‘trip of Confidence’ (China View 2009), where the EU and China agreed on the establishment of several new dialogue-based cooperation projects. The President of the European Commission, Barroso, invited the Chinese Premier, and several meetings were held between the Chinese delegation and EU representatives. In these meetings, especially the financial crisis and climate change were on the agenda, which were key issues addressed in the ‘partnership’ discourse (European Commission 2009a).

Of structured and institutionalised meetings and dialogues held in 2009, the most important was the two EU-China Summits. Two were held in this period, as the cancelled 2008 Summit was held in May 2009, and a second was held in November. High-level representatives from both side attended (Council 2009a; European Commission 2009f). Furthermore, strategic dialogues were held, in addition to human rights dialogues (HRD), the High Level Economic

Trade Dialogue (HED), and several other high level meetings and sectorial dialogues, where EU representatives and Chinese representatives met (European Commission 2010b).

The EU and China further expanded the level of cooperation by making new cooperation agreements. Among others, the two signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Occupational Health and Safety (ibid.). Of other agreements were the signing of a Civil Aviation Cooperation Programme and a China-Europe Public Administration Project (Commission 2009a).

One legal agreement was also signed between the EU and China in 2009. Next to a Protocol amending the Agreement on maritime transport between the European Community and its Member States, and the Government of the People's Republic of China,¹⁰ one new legal trade agreement was signed in 2009. This was an agreement between the EC and China on drug, where the goal was to prevent the spread of drugs and substances frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs, without affecting the regular trade activities between the two (European Commission 2009b). The new agreement was part of the building of a legal framework of the EU-China relationship. The PCA negotiations were still on going in 2009, but the comprehensive framework was not finalised.

The conduct of many meetings, and the further development of new dialogues and cooperation projects show that the EU used normative means, separating between military means and diplomatic means, and between a practice that violate international law and a practice that does not violate international law. Furthermore, the legal agreement signed between the two was also a normative means, as it expands the institutionalisation of the EU-China relationship and it is building up, instead of violating international law.

An increase in the engagement in bilateral cooperation, in comparison to the previous period, was evident, and the practices followed what was promoted in the 'partnership' discourse.

¹⁰ "Protocol amending the Agreement on maritime transport between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Government of the People's Republic of China, of the other part", Type of Agreement: Bilateral, Place of Signature: Brussels, Date of Signature: 31/03/2009, Date of Entry Into Force: 27/10/2009, Available from: <http://ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/prepareCreateTreatiesWorkspace/treatiesGeneralData.do?step=0&redirect=true&treatyId=7805>

Tools of normative coercion?

To answer whether the EU used the dialogues and agreements to promote normative goals, I study *how* the dialogues were used, and search for the use of Forsberg's normative means of power. By examining the most important high-level meeting, the EU-China Summits, and the joint statements that China and the EU present in the aftermath, I can identify the main goals that were promoted towards China, and also to what extent influence on China was achieved in this meeting. I also study what the EU claims to be the dialogue in which human concern is the main agenda, namely the HRD, and the legal agreement in which the EU could include normative clauses linking trade and human rights.

The promotion of a rule-based international order is a way of using the 'procedural instrument' mechanism, identified by Manners. Still, most of the dialogues and cooperation, HRD excluded, did not address norm concerns, and the use of persuasion and strategic communication to promote normative goals were thus only used to a limited extent. Furthermore, the possibility of including normative clauses in the legal agreement was not used. Potentially, normative commitments could be included, in which the parties could require the commitments to be held. This would follow the Parliament's request of a comprehensive normative approach, connecting the trade and formal agreements to human rights promotions. Still, the normative means of power 'invoking norm' was not in use, and the EU did not follow the Parliament's request in practice.

The 'partnership' discourse seems instead to have had a constitutive impact on the design of the trade agreement, as well as on the non-legal cooperation agreements. As expected from the 'partnership' discourse, the overall large focus on trade, displays a limited normative EU practice.

The two joint statements given in 2009, after the Summits, illustrate the main goal of the EU, namely economic benefits. In the short joint communiqué, summing up the first Summit, a shared commitment to peace, and peaceful resolution of disputes, was emphasised. Both actors expressed commitment to pursuing a comprehensive, strategic partnership, where mutual trust and respect were to be important principles (Council 2009a). The economic crisis, energy and global security were briefly mentioned, as well as regional areas of interests, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Iran (*ibid.*). The economic dialogue HED was also mentioned as satisfying to both actors. The previous large emphasis

on energy and environmental cooperation was not a topic in this statement, nor was the earlier dedication to human rights. This indicates a reduced EU influence on Chinese discourse. The Chinese opposition to the EU's attempts of negotiating a more substantial statement led instead to this 'bare bone press release' (Sitler in Thompson-Jones 2009). No flexibility was demonstrated from China (ibid.).

This indicates that the conflicts between the EU and China were not entirely solved. The statement highlights that the earlier stronger EU influence on negotiating common stances on many political and economic issues, including some normative commitments, was reduced in the first half of 2009.

The second, more comprehensive statement from the EU and China after the Summit in November shows a different image. In this statement, the two actors presented many common stances. A large part concerned the environment and global and bilateral cooperation on this issue (Council 2009f). The maturing and developing of the strategic partnership and the need for cooperation to address global challenges was also highlighted. On the development of the bilateral relationship, it was stated that "[b]oth sides agreed that the political mutual trust is enhancing, the pragmatic cooperation in economy, trade and other fields is deepening and expanding, the level of cultural and people-to-people exchanges is on the rise" (ibid.:2). Trust and pragmatism was thus highlighted. These wordings indicate that both considered the cooperating as a good, and a pragmatic approach was needed. Implicitly, pragmatism triumphed an ideological or value-based approach.

When the EU further underlined "(...) its support for China's peaceful development and respect for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity" (ibid.), the EU expressed commitment to *Chinese* values, in wordings that Chinese normally uses. This EU emphasis on Chinese sovereignty was new in this context, and highlighted how the EU struggled to gain support of its own values and ideas. Further, the EU appeared to moderate its norm engagement to secure a friendly environment, in which economic cooperation was possible.

Many of the EU goals promoted corresponded with those promoted in the 'partnership' discourse. Still, the EU promoted some norms that were described as normative goals in the 'norm concerning' discourse. Commitment to human rights and the rule of law were expressed, and the HRD was pointed to as the ideal means to address normative challenges (ibid.:3). The promotion of normative goals was thus somewhat higher in the second Summit

in 2009, and influence somewhat larger than in the previous. Still, the emphasis on the HRD, dialogues and mutual respect, contrasts the more confrontational approach asked for in the ‘norm concerning’ discourse. The statements mainly confirm that the EU to a large extent promoted economic and strategic cooperation above normative concerns, in a non-confrontational way.

In the HRDs in 2009, however, norm promotion was the main activity of the EU. The EU continued its practice of handing over a list of individuals of concern, express concerns for human rights and the rule of law, and urge for a ratification of ICCPR and for a reform of the RTL system (European Commission 2010a:156-157). The EU also brought up the unrest in Ürümqi in Xinjiang in July, and thus followed the calls from the Parliament in particular, of pressuring China to changes in its behaviour towards Uyghur minorities (ibid.:157). These concerns, revolving central EU norms, show that the EU continued its strategic communication on these issue.

While influence on China is hard to trace, the EU itself did not indicate substantial influence on China following the HRDs. The EU did not change Chinese perceptions on the Tibet issue, and was frustrated with little response on the individual concerns in May (Dlouha cited in Thompson-Jones 2009). Still, the Human Rights and Transformation Policy Director Dlouha from the Czech Republic argued “(...) that there has been slow, but visible progress in this dialogue, which is now in its 13th year” (ibid.). Some long-term impact was thus highlighted. As an example, Dlouha stressed that “(...) the Chinese no longer challenge the EU's right to ask human rights questions of them, something that the EU has yet to overcome in its dealings with Russia” (ibid.).

Still, challenges related to discourse influence were evident when the EU brought up the concern for human rights defenders. According to U.S. Mission to the European Union, Political Minister Counsellor Davis “China dismissed the concept of ‘human rights defenders’, contending that the EU's Human Rights Defenders appeared to be nothing more than criminals who had broken the law” (Davis 2009). While discourse influence was limited, the EU attempts of persuasion and the use of strategic communication for norm changes was part of a continued normative practice of the EU.

The EU’s practice of engaging in the HRDs stands out as the most normative two-ways mechanism of the EU, compared to the other dialogues and meetings. Still, the EU initiated an

internal evaluation of the dialogue in 2009, in consultations with the Parliament and civil society (European Commission 2010a:156). In the evaluation, recommendations on how to improve the impact in the HRDs were discussed (ibid.). The evaluation eventually led to a continuing of the dialogue in the years to come, and there was “(...) a consensus on the EU side that it is better to have this dialogue than not to have it [and] that it is better to talk rather than have a confrontational approach” (EU informant 2, 2012 [interview]). The initiating of the evaluation show that the Parliament’s many calls for an improved human rights dialogue had been heard. Still, the outcome resulted in the EU opinion that dialogue and persuasion was preferred over official pressure and confrontations, in line with what was promoted in the ‘partnership’ discourse.

5.2.2 One-way communication: Statements and symbolic acts

Normative means?

The Parliament adopted several texts that could be used to put pressure on China on human rights. Also the Presidency presented several statements on China. Furthermore, the leader of the World Uyghur Congress visited Europe and the European Parliament in 2009, and her visit could have resembled the Dalai Lama visit to the EU in 2008. The use of statements and official meetings are normative means, as these do not violate international law and are of a diplomatic character.

Tools of normative coercion?

Following the violence in Ürümqi in Xinjiang, Rebiya Kadeer, leader of the World Uyghur Congress, spoke in the European Parliament in September. On this occasion, she addressed the MEPs and called for a dialogue between Chinese authorities and the Uyghurs, on the subject of decades of repression from Chinese side (Kadeer in European Parliament 2009e). She further urged the EU to (...) put pressure on the Chinese authorities in order to allow an independent and true investigation that will state the correct figures regarding the number of arrested, detained and killed persons” (ibid.). This meeting was held, even though Kadeer was controversial to Chinese authorities. The Parliament’s act can be seen as a normative act, as it put focus on a normative issue, and is a strategic planned way of seeking influence and attention to this issue.

The meeting resembled the Dalai's meeting with the Parliament in 2008. However, Kadeer did not meet with the Presidency or other central EU representatives, like the Dalai did the year before. This shows that while the Parliament's concern of minority rights resulted in a meeting with a central Uyghur figure, the other institutions in the EU did not follow up. The meeting practices of the EU did thus to a lesser degree follow the 'norm concerning' discourse. Fear of a repetition of the EU-China tension in 2008, seemed to succeed the normative worries in other parts of the Union.

The Council Presidency still made several statements expressing normative concerns on China. While not following the call from the Parliament on a Tibet resolution in March, the Presidency made a statement on the situation in Xinjiang in July, on the execution of two Tibetan protesters in October and on the execution of nine persons from Xinjiang in November (Council 2009b; 2009c; 2009d). In December, one statement was made, concerning Liu Xiaobo, and another was made condemning the Chinese execution of the British citizen Akmal Saikh (Council 2009h; 2009i). All of these expressed concerns for violation of human rights, freedom of speech and minority rights. The practice of using official statements as a normative means of coercion thus continued.

Also the Parliament adopted texts concerning Tibet and human rights violations in China. The main themes of these were minority rights, the use of death penalty and general human rights violations (see e.g. European Parliament 2009a; 2009b; 2009c; 2009f). While pressure was made, impact seemed limited. A resolution on Tibet instead generated negative reactions from Chinese authorities. The Chinese Foreign Ministry commented stating that the affairs in Tibet were 'purely domestic' issues (Zhaoxu 2009). Furthermore, frustration over the EU's interference in these internal affairs was stated.

Stirred up by a handful of its members, the European Parliament turned a blind eye to facts and adopted the resolution that makes unreasonable demand to China. China expresses strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to this resolution which interferes in China's internal affairs and offends the Chinese people (Zhaoxu 2009).

This highlight that it especially was the involvement in the situation in Tibet that provoked the Chinese authorities. Also, the Parliament's statement was evidently noticed outside the Union, which was the intention of the Parliament. Furthermore, the statement had little influence on Chinese discourse, and the statement generated reactions that dialogue means, such as the HRD, did not.

Overall, both statements from the Presidency and the adopted texts in the Parliament largely communicated and put forward normative goals, and the use of these thus was to a large extent a normative practice. Still the lack of positive reactions indicates that the influence was limited.

5.2.3 Normative practices?

In this period two-ways communication were mostly used. These were normative means, but mostly used to promote economic, strategic, and other bilateral cooperation project not involving the promotion of core norms of Manners. Still, persuasion and strategic communication to promote norms were used in the HRD, and to a larger extent in the second Summit than in the first. The use of one-way communication was also used to some extent, often to put normative pressure on China. Still, the choice to not meet with Kadeer in the other EU institutions expect for the Parliament, indicate a decreased eager to use this kind of normative symbolic acts to pressure China. The EU furthermore did not use normative commitments in legal documents, and norm promotion was kept aside from the economic cooperation. Also, the influence on China relating core norms of Manners, were limited. Where some influence was seen directly, such as in the negotiated second joint statement, and in the HRDs, norm pressure had over time some impact. The official statements did on the contrary create negative reactions in China, condemning what China considered as interference in internal affairs.

What the analysis of the practice display is thus an increase in the use of a normative means, that is, increasingly use and development of, dialogue framework for cooperation and interaction, and of new agreements on several cooperation areas. Still, the use of Forsberg's mechanism of power and the promotion of normative goals in the practices decreased compared to the preceding period. Even though some statement were given where the main objective was norm pressure, and the engagement in the HRDs continued, the EU still reduced the norm promotion in 2009. Hence, the practice was less normative, compared to 2008.

5.3 Preliminary Conclusions

Similar to preceding periods, two main discourses were identified in 2009, centring on two different representations of China, and on different representations of the EU role. They presented different foreign policy goals and different views on how to promote these. The ‘partnership’ discourse centred on China as an equal partner, especially a vital economic partner, where the need for cooperation with China was more apparent than in 2007 and 2008. The EU goal was primarily to secure a strong economic bilateral relationship, and to cooperation on solving the financial and economic global crisis. The EU increasingly used the economic crisis to legitimise why it should engage more with China. This change highlights that the goal of the EU was an interest-based ‘possession goal’.

The ‘norm concerning’ discourse on the other hand was, as earlier, centred on China as norm violator, where China was represented as different from the EU, and where the foreign policy goal of the EU was to promote norms identical to Manners’ norms. These norms were largely similar to those promoted in the preceding periods. The concern for the Xinjiang conflict was larger, but highlights a continued concern for minority rights.

The relative power between the two discourses changed compared to the previous period. While the normative discourse was widely represented in 2008, this changed in 2009 when the Commission only represented the ‘partnership’ discourse, and the other EU institutions, except the Parliament, to a lesser extent represented the ‘norm concerning’ discourse. The ‘partnership’ discourse was thus the dominating discourse in this period. Still, China was in total less on the agenda of the EU's foreign policy in 2009, compared to the four preceding years.

The expected practices were the use of dialogue and promotion of economic cooperation, as promoted in the ‘partnership’ discourse. What the analysis of the practice shows was an increase in the use of dialogues and an institutionalisation of the cooperation. The practice of dialogues, the use of official diplomacy and the signing of a new legal agreements between the two were all normative means applied by the EU if normative means are means that are not military, and that do not violate international law in use. Still, the analysis of how the means was used highlighted that the EU did *not* promote norms through the normative means of power mechanism as strongly as earlier. While some of the EU practices were normative, like the norm promotion through statements and in the HRD, there were considerably potential

for a stronger and more widespread norm promotion in the many dialogues and meetings, and in potential normative agreements between the two. The potential of using strategic communication and pressure on normative issues was larger, as several EU representatives could have met Kadeer, presented even more statements and put an even stronger pressure on normative issues in the Summits. The influence of discourse was also rather limited, although some impact from the many years of consistent dialogues on human rights was recognised by the EU. Furthermore, the EU exerted greater influence in the second of two Summits. Even though some of the normative mechanisms of power were in use, the strong norm pressure from 2008 had faded.

The analysis shows that the EU was *not* a consistent normative actor in this period, where words and acts were normative. Rather, the ‘non-normative’ discourse was stronger, and the use of normative power mechanism was limited to certain practices. Mostly, the economic crisis was used as an argument to why the partnership goal should be promoted, and why trade and dialogue were preferred over norm promotion. The Chinese cancellation of the Summit in the preceding period had demonstrated that strong normative pressure from the EU, especially relating minority rights could result in Chinese punishment. A possible explanation of the reduced norm emphasis by Commissioners could therefore be that the Commission considered a repetition of punishment as especially undesirable. From the beginning of 2009, the EU changed its practices towards less norm promotion, and the ‘non-normative’ ‘partnership’ discourse was strengthened.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Main findings

In this thesis I have examined a research question concerning the EU as a normative actor. Firstly, how and to what degree is the EU's foreign policy discourse towards China of a normative character, and what normative elements can be identified in the EU's policy practice towards China? Secondly, to what extent was there consistency between normative commitments and normative practices in the period of 2005-2009? What the findings of this thesis demonstrate is that the EU *mainly* did not represent a normative discourse in this period, and that the practices were to a lesser extent applied to promote normative goals than to promote interest-based goals. While there was a relatively large consistency between goals identified in the main discourses, and what was done in practice, there was little consistency between *normative* commitments and *normative* practices in the period, except for the year of 2008. The year of 2008 serves as an exception, as the EU that year to a greater extent represented a normative discourse, and the practices mainly consisted of the use of normative means to promote normative goals.

Due to the economic interdependence and the apparent norm differences between the EU and China, the case was defined as a least likely case. Furthermore, the Chinese cancellation of the Summit in 2008, demonstrated clearly that norm promotion from the EU would generate consequences. The period was thus an interesting time to examine the theoretical expectations put forward in Manners' NPE theory.

The analysis of this five years period shows that two main discourses can be identified over the whole period. While some changes occurred within each of these two discourses, especially in the 'partnership' discourse, the discourses are primarily concerned with the same key goals. The 'partnership' discourse was to a large extent a 'non-normative' discourse. This inference is based on the absence of Manners' core norms, and on the justifications and motivations of the partnership goal. Economic and strategic benefits were both implicitly and explicitly intended outcomes from a partnership with China. The 'norm concerning' discourse was, on the other hand, evidently greatly normative. All of Manners' norms were key issues in this discourse, and especially the core norms were central to what the EU should promote towards China. Furthermore, the norm promotion goal was not proposed to secure either

political or economic rewards. On the contrary, the norms were to be promoted based on the intrinsic belief in them. Chinese protests should furthermore not prevent such norm promotion.

While the discourses together largely dominated the EU's foreign policy towards China in this period, the relative strength between them varied. The analysis of 2005 and 2006 shows that the 'partnership' discourse was represented by the Commission and the Commissioners, and to a large extent in the Council and the European Council. Both an economic and a strategic partnership were pursued. The alternative 'norm concerning' discourse was in this period mostly represented in the European Parliament, and only occasionally by Commissioners and the Council. The analysis of 2007 and 2008 shows that this changed, as the 'partnership' discourse was decreasingly represented within the EU, and a partnership was a less stated goal, especially in 2008. Concurrently, the 'norm concerning' discourse was increasingly represented, and normative goals were thus promoted to a larger extent. The analysis of the last period shows that the 'partnership' discourse again was represented stronger than the 'norm concerning' discourse, and that especially economic cooperation was pursued in light of the economic crisis.

The analysis of the main practices of the EU towards China over this period display that the means that the EU deployed in its engagement with China all can be understood as normative means according to Tocci's wide conceptualisation. The examination of how they were used, and whether normative goals were promoted, still leads to the interpretation of the practices as only partly normative. The two-way communication means were mainly used to promote interest-based goals throughout the whole period, with the exception of the HRDs and some norm promotion in the Summits. The one-way communication means were more often applied to promote normative goals. Symbolic acts were often used to promote norms, such as through the maintenance of the embargo and the engagement in minority rights in Tibet, resulting in a meeting with the Dalai Lama and several statements. When normative goals were promoted, the EU used strategic communication and pressure or persuasion on China regarding norms, and often referred to international rules, institutions or law. The overall influence on China still seemed limited, especially from the use of public one-way diplomacy and on pressure relating to Tibet and minority rights. Furthermore, normative commitments in agreements were never included, which shows that norm pressure was made in other arenas than in formal or informal agreements, which mainly concerned trade. As confirmed by EU

employees (EU informant 1, 2012 [interview]), this separation of norm promotion from economic cooperation was especially encouraged by the Commission. Even in 2008, when the EU was closest to a consistent normative actor, norm promotion was kept to public diplomacy and political dialogues and meetings. The norm promotion was consistently kept outside the economic cooperation and dialogues.

The findings show that while there was a strong consistency between the dominant discourse and the main practices, the EU foremost was *not* a consistent *normative actor* in this period. In 2008, however, the norm concerning discourse was strengthened, at the same time as the less represented ‘partnership’ discourse changed towards stronger concerns for international rules and multilateralism. This strengthened normative discourse had furthermore a stronger constitutive impact on the practice, as normative goals, especially related to concerns for Tibetans and their political and civilian rights, were promoted. What this illustrates is that the concerns for Tibet and minority rights were particularly strong in the EU, and when the Chinese forcefully put down the demonstrations in Tibet in March 2008, the EU reacted. Furthermore, the EU-China relationship was already characterised by economic conflicts, frustrating many EU representative. When the relationship already was challenged, and large, widely known human rights violations occurred, the EU’s goals and practices changed.

Still, a new abrupt change in the EU was witnessed from late 2008 to early 2009. The EU increasingly emphasised the economic relationship between the two, and normative concerns were less evident in both discourse and practice. Reports on norm violations in China in general, and towards both Tibetans in the aftermath of the demonstrations in 2008, and towards Uyghur minority protesters in Xinjiang in 2009, could lead to the expectation of a continued engagement in norm pressure towards China. While the Parliament partly continued to engage in these issues, the engagement in the rest of the EU declined. The economic and financial crisis, affecting the EU severely, was an even more influential contextual factor that changed how the EU represented its goals and what the EU prioritised in its direct engagement with China. Concurrently, China had demonstrated to the EU that interference in Chinese internal matters could lead to severe consequences. Furthermore, the use of one-way communication diplomacy more often resulted in negative responses from Chinese authorities, than two-way communication on normative concerns.

The economic crisis was evidently a new reference point in the ‘partnership’ discourse, explaining the need for economic bilateral and global cooperation. The importance of Chinese

economy and the interdependence between the two was increasingly highlighted. As underlined in interviews with EU employees, many EU member states rely and relied on China and Chinese support, with the consequence that the EU no longer is in a position in which it can require as much from China as earlier (EU informant 1, 2012 [interview]).

The dependence on China, combined with the fear of a repetition of the 2008 conflict and Chinese reactions, seems to have led to an increased focus on economic cooperation and of mutual respect, instead of normative demands. This included respect for differences in values, highlighting that a part of the EU meant that similar values was not a precondition for strategic and economic cooperation, which was the main goals of the EU. Furthermore, the Parliament also to some extent concentrated more on internal matters in the last period, instead of on the EU-China relationship, with the exception of the continued focus on Tibet (EU informant 2, 2012 [interview]). This indicates that when large economic gains are on the line, as during the financial crisis, economic gains are preferred over the promotion of norms.

6.2 Theoretical implications and further research

I have in this thesis attempted to shed light on the EU-China relationship and to what extent the EU acted as a consistent normative actor towards China in the period 2005-2009. Furthermore, the combined study of main goals and the policy practices has highlighted to what extent the EU follows commitments in practice. The theoretical framework has been a combination of Ian Manners' Normative Power Europe theory, and two different attempts of conceptualising a normative foreign policy and a normative power by Nathalie Tocci and Tuomas Forsberg. How to measure the concept 'a normative actor' is disputed, and the different conceptualisations of Tocci and Forsberg were valuable. Still, what my analysis has shown is that the application of a wide understanding of normative means, as all means applied without violating international law, puts virtually all EU acts in the category 'normative'. By applying Forsberg's normative mechanisms of power, and thus focus on how the means were used, was therefore valuable, as it made it possible to examine the practices more closely to see whether normative goals were promoted. Still, my analysis has displayed some challenges as to how to operationalise some of the normative means of power. The 'systemic influence on discourse' mechanism is difficult to separate from 'normative impact' and additionally difficult to operationalise. Still, these conceptualisations were helpful in setting criteria for normativity that could be used to examine the concept empirically.

Furthermore, while a consensual understanding of a ‘normative power’, or a ‘normative actor’, will not necessarily be agreed upon, specific criteria are necessary to conduct empirical studies of the concept. The NPE concept will have a greater value if empirical analysis applying and testing specified criteria can be conducted. Such studies could provide valuable feedback to the theoretical debate. As Forsberg (2011:1190) highlights “(...) we have to accept some degree of conceptual pluralism”. Still, “[a]s social scientists we need to explicate the meanings of contested concepts and to be as consistent as possible when using them within a single study” (ibid.).

What the findings from this least likely case show is that both normative and interest-based goals were expressed simultaneously in all three periods. The goals were mostly interest-based, and in its practices the EU mainly promoted these goals. *Still*, the EU was close to being a consistent normative actor in 2008. Despite being in conflict with economic and strategic interests, norm promotion occurred, at times to a large extent. This strengthens the assumption that the EU commits to norms in its foreign policy. What was still evident was that when economic interests were understood as greatly endangered, the EU acted less as a consistent normative actor.

My findings illustrate that, at times, the EU promotes normative goals, even towards an important global power, and even when jeopardising economic and political gains. While having certain limitations, the Normative Power Europe theory still contributes to the understanding of the EU’s foreign policy towards China.

What would be interesting for further research is the examination of discourse and practice in the subsequent period. The period in 2011, when the EU cancelled the EU-China Summit due to the severity of the economic crisis in Europe, would be an interesting follow-up period to examine. The EU’s normative engagement towards other states would also be interesting to study in light of the crisis. By this, one could examine whether the changes from 2008 to 2009 was a general trend in the EU’s foreign policy, or only evident in the EU-China relations.

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