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Hegemonic? Chinese and European discourses on development in sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

The increasing presence of the People's Republic of China's in sub-Saharan Africa is one of the most significant phenomena in the political economy of development since the end of the Cold War. This same period has been characterised by the dominance of Western politico-economic norms within development. As a 'normative power' within this hegemonic development discourse, the European Union has had a position of asymmetric power (soft imperialism) with ability to impose norms upon sub-Saharan Africa through political conditionalities. This thesis therefore asks if the EU's position of relative power is compromised by the alternative political approach of Chinese development assistance. Using a social constructivist approach, EU and China development policies are traced to their domestic origins. Actor-specific approaches to soft power are also included. Culture is incorporated into the analysis to overcome Eurocentrism by contextualising European cultural universalism, while also expanding on differences in construction of interests, and governance. Both actors' approaches to development are compared and contrasted to determine to what extent they diverge, and what probability of convergence exists. Ultimately, it is determined that the EU's soft imperialist ability to impose politico-economic norms through development assistance has diminished due to China's development presence in sub-Saharan Africa. Many features of the Chinese approach are attractive to African political elites, including China's pragmatic approach to development, putting great emphasis on local context, as well as having a culture that promotes diversity in the global system while European cultural universalism promotes homogeneity. The existence of the Chinese option increases policy space for African governments. Due to major cultural and historical differences, China is unlikely to adopt a political approach to development that converges with that of the EU. Nonetheless, due to Chinese pragmatism and the EU's soft power approach, as well as EU-China economic interdependence, political confrontation is highly unlikely and dialogue possible.

Abstract

Die zunehmende Präsenz der Volksrepublik China in Subsahara-Afrika stellt heute eine der bedeutendsten Phänomene der politischen Ökonomie seit dem Ende des Kalten Krieges dar. Dieser Zeitraum wurde durch eine Dominanz westlicher politisch-ökonomischer Entwicklungsnormen geprägt. Dabei nahm die Europäische Union in hegemonialen Entwicklungsdiskursen eine Position asymmetrischer Macht ein (*soft imperialism*). Durch die Verknüpfung von Entwicklungshilfe und politischen Bedingungen hatte sie die Möglichkeit, eigene Normen auf Subsahara-Afrika zu übertragen. Die vorliegende Arbeit geht folglich der Frage nach, ob die durch relative Macht gekennzeichnete Position der EU die alternativen Ansätze der chinesischen Entwicklungshilfe beeinträchtigt hat. Dabei werden mittels eines sozial-konstruktivistischen Ansatzes die jeweiligen Entwicklungskonzepte der EU und Chinas bis zu ihrer Entstehungsperiode zurückverfolgt. Akteur-spezifische Ansätze zur *soft power* sind ebenfalls enthalten. *Kultur* wird in die Analyse einbezogen, um die Gefahr von Eurozentrismus durch die Kontextualisierung des europäischen kulturellen Universalismus umzugehen und gleichzeitig auf Unterschiede der Interessenskonstruktion auf *governance*-Ebene einzugehen. Die Ansätze beider Akteure in Bezug auf Entwicklung werden verglichen und gegenübergestellt um festzustellen inwieweit Divergenz- oder Konvergenzmomente sich erkennen lassen. Schließlich wird gezeigt, dass die Fähigkeit der EU durch *soft imperialism* politisch-ökonomische Normen über Entwicklungshilfe auf Subsahara-Afrika zu übertragen, durch die Präsenz Chinas und seiner Entwicklungspolitik auf dem Kontinent, geschwächt wurde. Viele Charakteristika des chinesischen Ansatzes, einschließlich eines pragmatischen Entwicklungsansatzes, sind für afrikanische politische Eliten attraktiv. Unter anderem wird geschätzt, dass China großen Wert auf lokale Kontexte legt und eine Kultur verkörpert, die in einem globalen System Vielfalt fördert. Dagegen steht der europäische kulturelle Universalismus, der grundsätzlich nach Homogenität verlangt. Die Existenz der *chinesischen Option* erhöht den politischen Spielraum für afrikanische Regierungen. Aufgrund großer kultureller und historischer Unterschiede, ist es unwahrscheinlich, dass die politischen Entwicklungsansätze der EU und Chinas sich vereinbaren lassen. Dennoch ist aufgrund des chinesischen Pragmatismus und des *soft-power-Ansatzes* der EU, aber auch wegen gegenseitiger europäisch-chinesischer Wirtschaftsabhängigkeiten politische Konfrontation höchst unwahrscheinlich und ein Dialog möglich.

Chapter One: Introduction

*So we will share this road we walk
And mind our mouths and beware our talk
Till peace we find tell you what I'll do
All the things I own I will share with you
If I feel tomorrow like I feel today
We'll take what we want and give the rest away
Strangers on this road we are on
We are not two we are one*

Strangers by The Kinks¹

1.1 Why China?

It is always necessary to answer the so-called “so what?” question when one chooses to address a given topic. In the case of this thesis, the answer may be obvious. The increasing presence of China in sub-Saharan Africa has changed the face of development – this has in turn led to rather fervent research across the social sciences on this topic. I have decided to focus on the implication this trend has on the political discourse surrounding development (with an emphasis on culture), though admittedly when looking at China in Africa, there are a plethora of angles that one could analyse. As much as the People's Republic of China is criticised for its role in Africa, and as little as its internal political system is understood, the ultimate question of how development discourse might change as a result of China's involvement south of the Sahara is certainly intriguing, if not essential.

From an historical perspective, China is certainly not 'the new kid on the block' as is presented in certain sectors of the Western media. Indeed, the infancy of China's relationship with Africa has long passed. By analogy, using 1956 as the starting point, when a young, revolutionary China (aged seven) became engaged quite dynamically in the African neighbourhood. With China achieving recognition of the global community in 1971 (through accession to the United Nations), its friendship with Africa had paid off through their political support in

¹ The Kinks, *Strangers*, The Darjeeling Limited (Universal, 2008).

return. Starting in the late 70s, now in its late twenties, China began to focus inward, on itself, developing the capabilities to be autonomous, and industrious, something that any driven person (or nation in this instance) at such an age would aspire to. Towards the end of the 80s, as China found itself increasingly isolated by the events of Tiananmen, 1989, it quite literally, was in need of friends. By this time, China had grown wiser, having abandoned the revolutionary motives of its adolescence, opting for a more pragmatic approach which, now entering its forties, would help pull the People's Republic out of its midlife crisis, as it were. In need of allies in the global neighbourhood, China turned back to Africa, renewing friendships and eventually forming progressively stronger partnerships. Once China had turned fifty, in 1999, its year over year exchange with its African, 'all-weather friends' was increasing exponentially. Now past its sixtieth year, China's coming of age, and half a century of involvement in African development both merit analysis.

1.2 Why Europe?

The European Union is a unique political formation, and a model for regionalism occurring the globe over. The EU is an interesting actor, encompassing former colonial powers, and discursively focused more on normative rather than material power. The EU and sub-Saharan Africa not only share a colonial legacy, but there is also a history of development assistance that goes back to 1963 with the first Yaoundé convention between the European Economic Community and former African colonies. The EEC and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States were aligned with the signing of the Lomé conventions in 1975. European development policy has more or less followed global (hegemonic) trends in development, so it is interesting to see how a more just preferential trade agreement of the 1970s and Lomé would be displaced by the prospect of neoliberal free trade and political conditionalities aimed especially at strengthening economic reform,

finally confirmed in the Cotonou agreement in 2000. While the EU struggles in certain policy areas to maintain a unified position, development is somehow different. While contributions between a development-conscious country like Denmark and a former-communist country like Slovakia are radically different, they subscribe to variations of the same hegemonic development discourse based on the liberal international order. Indeed, many of the *acquis communautaires*, conditionalities requisite to join the union, themselves function similarly to the political conditionalities that are a product of this discourse. More than twenty years past the end of the Cold War, there are now ten and a half former communist countries in the EU. Nowhere else has the triumph of the liberal democratic order been more directly felt. Thus, where China is perceived as a challenge to the hegemonic order and development discourse, of which the EU is a member, it is essential to understand the dynamics of such a relationship. Add to that the complexity of China-EU trade interdependency, and the increasing displacement of Africa's erstwhile biggest development partner, Europe, by its meanwhile biggest development partner, China, and we have ourselves a narrative worthy of academic attention.

1.3 Why Compare China and Europe in sub-Saharan Africa?

Since the end of the Cold War, the dominant paradigm in development has carried with it the neoliberal and liberal democratic ideals of the Western-led, hegemonic global order. With its explicit emphasis on the spread of norms, the European Union is an important actor within this configuration. Indeed, due to the uneven power relations between the EU and African 'partners', the EU has had the ability to impose its priority political norms through political conditionalities. This represents a form of imposed soft power: soft imperialism.

However, this existing power dynamic may be changing. Building upon a significant history of development cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa,

the People's Republic of China has dramatically increased its trade and development assistance with the region over the past decade and a half. Chinese trade has jumped from over US\$10 billion in 2000 to over US\$100 billion in 2010; while Africa is set to receive US\$10 billion in Chinese preferential loans between 2010 and 2012.² China's increasing presence here, however, has significance beyond mere economic consideration. The shifting political context of development discourse in sub-Saharan Africa is an important consideration, especially in that the Chinese approach to development does not follow the conventions of the 'traditional donors'. As will be investigated here, the domestic political and cultural roots of China's approach to development differ greatly from those of the EU. In light of this, it will be important to see to what extent China's presence impacts European development hegemony in the region.

This thesis is therefore meant to identify the basis for a major shift occurring in external influence on international development. This topic is of significance for several reasons. The rise of powers of the global South in the international political economy is an important phenomenon for the present and future. China is at the forefront of this rise, and ultimately, the changing political context of development may also shed light on future dynamics of the global system as a whole as it moves towards multipolarity. Also, any kind of change of the power balance surrounding the development discourse will have serious implications for sub-Saharan Africa, especially as the Chinese option reduces dependence on Western conditional aid, thus potentially opening up policy space for African states to pursue a wider array of developmental approaches.

How can we account for China's approach to development and how does it relate to the presently dominant approach to development? While the impact of each approach on the ground, in sub-Saharan Africa, is important; the domestic political, cultural, historical and strategic realms

2 *China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation* (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, The People's Republic of China, 2010), http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-12/23/c_13661632.htm.

are essential to understanding the construction of development policy.³ Cognisance of these contextual factors will serve several other purposes. Firstly, it will serve to place, or contextualise, the EU's hegemonic development discourse within its European/Western context, thus helping to overcome the Eurocentric structural and analytical aspects that currently underlie international relations. This includes identifying European universalist cultural norms as context-specific, in contrast to Chinese particularist cultural norms, both of which have a great impact on respective development approaches. Secondly, as development policy emerges out of domestic context, an understanding of these contexts will help in determining how the EU and PRC development approaches diverge, and to what extent they might foreseeably converge.

Ultimately the domestic factors that underlie Chinese and European approaches to development will be linked to the respective international 'systemic cultures' they represent. These are identified as the hegemonic development discourse in the case of the EU, emphasising democracy and neoliberalisation, while China's push for an alternative political and economic order emphasises diversity, and reinforces the supremacy of the state. The institutionalisation and proliferation of China's heterodox development discourse represents a relative challenge to the prevailing hegemonic development discourse.

1.4 Organisation of the Thesis

This first chapter introduces the topic, providing background and context for those that follow as well as identifying issues within the enquiry. The second, theoretical chapter outlines the social constructivist approach of the thesis. This idea-based approach to international actors helps in analysing how their domestic construction affects external development policy. Also essential to the construction of policy is

3 Lancaster emphasises the importance of understanding domestic politics in the construction of development policy. Carol Lancaster, *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007).

culture. This distinction proves important as respective EU and PRC conceptions of soft power are culturally-based. Theories explored include China's 'soft use of power' approach, and the EU's 'civilian power' and 'soft imperialism' approaches. Ultimately, important concepts such as Gramsci's 'hegemony', Cox's 'world orders' and Foucault's 'regimes of truth' are introduced in order to analyse the power and legitimacy of the hegemonic development discourse, against which China's increasing influence must be compared.

The third chapter begins by placing the EU within the hegemonic development discourse. Europe as a normative power is discussed with particular reference to European cultural universalism. This explains the European need to spread norms, in a contemporary context especially related to neoliberalism and good governance. Ideas such as Eurocentric developmentalism and diffusionism, as well as modernisation give further background to the spread of European norms globally. The chapter then charts the historical involvement of the EU in sub-Saharan Africa; from its predecessor, the European Economic Community and the Lomé conventions to the EU and the Cotonou Agreement. A parallel trajectory of internal EEC/EU reform and changing priorities in its development policy are visible as it shifted from being almost entirely economic, to becoming highly politicised. Contemporary institutions and policies are then analysed, demonstrating the importance of political conditionalities and economic liberalisation along with regionalism in EU development policy.

Chapter four begins by discussing Chinese (political) culture and its impact on Chinese foreign and development policies. The background of China's non-interference and mutual respect doctrine is given context, especially in light of Confucian ideas such as harmony and respect for diversity. An important cultural aspect to foreign policy, *guanxi*, is discussed with the emphasis on paired relationships maintained in the long-term through confidence building, is an indication of the difference in construction of Chinese interests. The parallel internal changes reflected in development policy, from ideology to pragmatism, are also

examined. Then China's historical relations with Africa are overviewed: from the revolutionary spread of Maoism through African solidarity in UN accession, to the Tiananmen crisis. It was with the latter event that China and Africa set the foundation for today's high level of cooperation. The structure of Chinese development assistance is then discussed.

Then in chapter five, the discussion section, various aspects of Chinese and European approaches to development will be compared and contrasted. Starkly different cultural outlooks are discussed as they relate to Europe's universalist approach (pushing for global homogenisation) versus China's particularist approach (pushing for global diversity). This further emphasises the crucial need for context in understanding the construction of development policy and discourse. Domestic political factors such as strategic priorities and governance will be discussed as they impact respective EU and Chinese development policies. Both EU and PRC approaches to development will be reviewed, also looking at the failure to date of EU-China-Africa trilateral cooperation. It will be argued that the Chinese-led Forum on China-Africa Cooperation represents an alternative systemic culture regarding development discourse. Thus, the EU's soft imperialist position in sub-Saharan Africa has weakened. Nonetheless, the Chinese are constrained by both economic interdependence with the EU, and by cultural priorities including harmony and pragmatism. The discussion will conclude with African prospects, mainly insisting that the Chinese presence fits with the interests of African political elites, as it opens up greater policy space for more diverse approaches to development to be implemented.

In the final, sixth Chapter, concluding arguments are presented. Using the case of EU versus Chinese approaches to development in sub-Saharan Africa, it is postulated that the thesis provides a new understanding of the intersection of culture and domestic politics in the construction of development discourses. This understanding highlights the importance of viewing international relations as intercultural relations as we move towards a multipolar world. In such a situation the

construction of both European and Chinese interests through their self-image, politics, culture and history are all contextual factors that must be taken into account when analyzing the relationship of these ‘traditional’ and ‘emerging’ development actors. The thesis has identified the importance of (1) domestic politics and (2) culture in influencing the construction of external development policies, contributing to the construction of (3) systemic cultures on the global levels that sustain these discourses. Culture, a major component of domestic politics often ignored in political analysis, will be identified throughout this body of work as being essential to understanding the diverging development discourses of the EU and China. The systemic cultures associated to the development approaches of both actors are at odds. Ultimately, on regional and bilateral levels the divergence of these systemic cultures creates policy space where only one systemic culture, the hegemonic development discourse, used to dominate. There is thus evidence that the EU’s soft imperialist position in Africa has surely been impacted by Chinese development assistance. Indeed, for African states the existence of the Chinese option opens up new policy space for development. Ultimately, as a result of EU-China economic interdependence, and the centrality of soft power to both actors’ foreign policies, dialogue is possible and political confrontation between the two will be highly unlikely.

The scope of this thesis is limited to the two major external actors in African development. African perspectives are not given adequate attention due to the already large scope of the thesis. However, this analysis should provide vital context as to the construction of development policy for two important actors for Africa. Ultimately, this work is meant to underpin future research as to the impact of the policy space created by China’s increasing presence on political development in sub-Saharan Africa.

Chapter Two: Social Constructivism, Culture, and Soft Power

2.1 Introduction

This theoretical chapter will begin by addressing how international actors at their core can be analysed as 'ideational' in nature. This comes from social constructivist analysis. The construction of interests through ideas, and an emphasis on norms of international political actors is highlighted. The concept of 'systemic cultures' will be introduced in order to see how international structures are constructed, and how they are dynamic, not static.

The chapter then discusses the importance of culture, enabling us to view international relations on the basis of more complex social interactions, where diverse conceptions of the political collective, interests, world order and even ideology emphasise international relations as being intercultural relations.⁴ Culture is an important factor in helping to overcome the Western-centric bias of international relations analysis, recognising that Western-constructed norms have a cultural context, despite their universalistic claims. It is also important to recognise the impact of culture on interests and norms, which ultimately inform development policy. The theory of 'constrained relativism' will also help in understanding what kind of social solidarities differently structured cultures tend towards, and how structural differences (e.g. individualistic vs. hierarchical) affect interests, norms, and policy.

Theories of soft power will then be discussed, beginning with concepts of 'civilian power', 'soft imperialism' and 'Normative Power Europe' all pertaining to the European Union, and the spread of norms that is integral to EU international relations. The 'soft use of power' approach will then be discussed as it relates to how power is used in a prudent way in social relationships. This theory has been developed in the Chinese international relations literature.

4 Adda Bozeman (1994) qtd. in Jiangfeng Chen, "The Practice of the Mean: China's Soft Power Cultivation," in *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, ed. Mingjiang Li (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009), 83-102.

Finally, this theory section will go over concepts related to power relations in the international system including Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony' and Cox's complementary definition of 'world orders', as well as Foucault's ideas on discursive power relations and so-called 'regimes of truth'.

The ideas discussed throughout this theoretical section will be applied to both actors in assessing their relative soft power, the norms and conceptions of world order that they seek to promote, emphasising that they are socially constructed actors, and that culture matters in understanding their respective societal and therefore development policy priorities.

2.2 Taking a Social Constructivist Approach

This thesis deals with a question as to whether there is a major shift happening on the discursive level in development. The aspect of political discourse is just one dimension of a broader politico-economic shift that is seeing the rise of Southern nations in the global system, including but not limited to the BRIC countries.⁵ In order to find an appropriate approach to an increasingly dynamic international system, we must think first of all about what kind of scientific implication a more multipolar world has within the field of international relations (IR). For a long time, IR been dominated by a Eurocentric analysis of international reality. Indeed, the domination of Realists has set the international scene in stone, as they suppose it to be ruled by hard rules of materialist self-interest and rationality. It is clear that if we are seeking to chart an evolving international system, including the essential role of ideas, (the use of) Realism (as a theoretical perspective) would hinder this effort.⁶ It is a dynamic shift in the international system, especially in ideas and norms, that this thesis attempts to capture. It is for this reason that a more social/interpretivist approach will be employed: namely, a social

⁵ The BRIC countries are: Brazil, Russia, India and China.

⁶ The assumption of a static international system is counterproductive to the attempt of this thesis to display that the international system is changing through the rise, especially, of non-European actors; thus problematising the preeminence of Eurocentric thought in International Relations more broadly.

constructivist approach.⁷

Social constructivism, following Alexander Wendt, emphasises the importance of (systemic) culture(s) shared at the international level between states.⁸ The emphasis on cultures in the plural is important as it supposes that it is possible for the international system, or at least components of it, to be transformed by the state actors within the system, allowing for more diversity in the international system. This opens up space for the possibility of competing, overlapping, or at the very least diverging cultures, shared by varying groups of states.⁹ In the context of this thesis, the possibility for competing international cultures challenges the implicitness of Western hegemony. Though the international system is assumed to be a largely Western creation, it is possible for other actors to renegotiate or transform that system based on their interests and ideas.¹⁰ With China being a developing actor, the question in social constructivist language might read something like: is China pushing a competing systemic culture at the international level regarding development? As will be shown, the emphasis of a competing (systemic) culture on the international level ultimately does not only implicate development alone, but rather a whole catalogue of issues relating to the internal structure of states, and the structure of the global system more generally. As the argument is developed, it will also be shown how culture in the societal sense also carries great importance in terms of intercultural relations, linkages, how international actors perceive their interests.¹¹ The incorporation of societal culture as well, challenges some of the assumptions of rational scientific analysis.

Alexander Wendt's central thesis in his book *Social Theory of International Politics* is that the meaning of power and the content of interests are

7 Peer Schouten, "Theory Talk #27: Christian Reus-Smit on IR Cultures, Re-thinking IR and Bridging the Normative-Empirical Divide," *Theory Talks*, 2009, <http://www.theory-talks.org/2009/03/theory-talk-27.html>.

8 Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

9 Ibid.

10 See Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, "Why is there no non-Western IR theory?," in *Non-Western international relations theory: Perspectives on and beyond Asia*, ed. Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (Oxford: Routledge, 2010), 1-25.

11 It will also be posited that similar societal cultures can mutually understand certain perspectives, while others prevent mutual comprehension, thus weakening rational scientific assumptions about human interaction.

largely a function of ideas.¹² This is counter to a more materialist reading on power and interests which suggests that they are simply a function of either material possession or material aspiration, as they are employed by the dominant school of international relations, (neo)realism. Social constructivism, according to Wendt, challenges the causality of material self-interest by asking a simple question: “to what extent do ideas constitute those material causes in the first place?”¹³ With ideas assumed as a basis for all social relations, Wendt argues for a social and thus ideational basis of international society.

Within an idea-driven world it might be hard to imagine how structure, often materially assumed, operates. However, structures are a production of social systems. Wendt describes structure through the notion that interests are largely constituted by ideas, thus distributions of knowledge structure social systems.¹⁴ This idealist approach to structure, and the idea that structures are somehow negotiated in an ideational sense means that “the structure of the contemporary international system contains a lot of culture.”¹⁵ When Wendt speaks about culture it is largely referring to shared practices which are developed among states in the international system.

The development of international structures, negotiated between states, is reliant on process. That is how state agents and systemic cultures are created, sustained, and sometimes transformed.¹⁶ Structures themselves rely on what Ashley describes as “accomplishments of practice.”¹⁷ It is through repeated interaction that states create international structures, thus the concept of “structural change as cultural change.”¹⁸ In looking at process in international politics, Wendt treats states as endogenous, or internal to process. From a social interactionist perspective, Wendt lays out two important aspects of international social processes. Firstly, an evolutionary model of identity formation demonstrates how identities are produced and reproduced through interaction among actors in the

12 Ibid. *Social Theory of International Politics*, 96.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., 189.

15 Ibid., 190.

16 Ibid., 313.

17 Ashley (1988) in Ibid.

18 Ibid., 314.

(international) social process; and secondly, structural change in international politics involves 'collective identity formation.'¹⁹ Collective identity formation emphasises that the creation of international structures (or systemic cultures) is a social process through which states form relationships based on common understanding and goals. This can include bilateral relations, international regimes, and multilateral institutions.

The study of international regimes is especially important here, as they too are reliant upon process, and are informal in comparison with multilateral institutions. Regimes are “governing arrangements constructed by states to coordinate their expectations and organise aspects of their behaviour in various issue areas.”²⁰ These also function much like the norms and principles that they affirm, in that they function in communicative (or, discursive) and constitutive senses.²¹ In other words, regimes play an important role in political discourse, as well as to the extent that they represent blocs of nations with similar (issue-based) goals, and usually share some aspect of history. While the regime European Union-African Caribbean and Pacific Group (EU-ACP) relations, focusses on achieving solutions to the issue of development, it can also be argued that their linkage is also based on the historical relationship shared between many of the ACP states and former colonial powers, now EU member states. The Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is another example of an international regime to be discussed.

Within 'cultural selection' Wendt identifies two processes by which culture is produced and reproduced: by imitation and through social learning. It is the latter, social learning, that is most important for social constructivists. It is posited that through interactions, identities and interests are sustained.²² This joint constitution of identity counters the methodological individualism employed by the majority of international

19 Ibid., 317.

20 Krasner, 1983, qtd. in John Gerrard Ruggie and Friedrich Kratochwil, “Epistemology, ontology, and the study of international regimes,” in *Constructing the world polity: essays on international institutionalization*, by John Gerrard Ruggie (London: Routledge, 1998), 88.

21 Ibid., 85.

22 Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 327-331.

relations scholars, particularly neorealists and neoliberals.²³ This also challenges the *given* nature of identity and interests as social interactionist approach emphasises that: “even when the ideas that constitute identities and interests are not changing, they are continually reinforced in interaction.”²⁴

Wendt then presents four master variables leading to collective identity formation under (international) anarchy: 'interdependence' (where the outcome of an interaction for each state depends on the choices of the others); 'common fate' (where “individual survival, fitness, or welfare depends on what happens to the group as a whole”)²⁵; 'homogeneity' (where states have similar corporate identities, including institutional form, function, and causal powers or where regime type is similar)²⁶; and 'self-restraint' (the assurance that sovereign states will treat one another with mutual respect and thus have a position of relative equality and trust).²⁷ The last variable is separated from the rest as both self-restraint and one of the first three variables must exist in order for collective identity formation to occur.

As will be elaborated upon later, the democratic discourse that surrounds development is forwarded by relatively homogenous Western actors, who then attempt to establish homogeneity with actors of the global South as a means of forwarding liberal democracy and neoliberal development in unison. A major question for this thesis will be whether or not China is attempting to form a new homogenous culture among countries of the global South where their respective aspirations for development are not contingent on democratic political forms.²⁸

Alexander Wendt's social constructivist theory gives us an important

23 Ibid., 335.

24 Ibid., 334.

25 Ibid., 349.

26 Ibid., 353.

27 Ibid., 318.

28 While Realists might argue that achieving this kind of understanding between states is not possible due to extreme self-interest and competition, Wendt argues that within international cultures states can make inferences on the of the other party through shared knowledge. This shared knowledge can be acquired when states act in three ways: firstly, where they repeatedly comply to principles of mutual respect, secondly where their domestic political system demonstrates a commitment to mutual respect, and thirdly through self-binding (unilateral action that demonstrates commitment to self-restraint to the international community without seeking immediate returns). Ibid., 360, 364.

framework through which to analyse states from an ideational perspective. The conception that ideas *are* interests and constitute the identities of international actors challenges us to look at the constitution of these actors for insights into their international behaviour. This constitutive approach emphasises that the internal structure of actors very much informs and affects their external outlook and action. The idea that structure in the international system is constituted by cultures, built by states in a social process points towards the ability of those structures to be transformed, or for new structures to emerge. Collective identity formation is also important in thinking about how international cultures or structures are formed through ideational processes shared between states.

The purpose of this section was to outline how international actors establish identities and interests through ideas from a social constructivist perspective. The idea that global structures are ideational creations, and that they are somehow malleable based on the perspective of those actors who constitute the international system, is an important theoretical foundation for this thesis. This is because in looking at the political discourse surrounding development in Africa, we are essentially looking at the international culture of development, both as it has been formed as a global structure, and how certain aspects of it are perhaps being challenged by the increased presence of China within the area that structure dominates. Viewing the international system as ideational processes allows us the ability to focus on the political dimension. Though economic and material interests are indeed important, that dimension is somewhat removed from the focus of this thesis. In her analysis on Chinese development aid in Africa, Debora Bräutigam emphasises how “the political economy of foreign aid is driven by complex interactions among technology, politics, ideology and institutions that to a significant extent drive the outcomes of many foreign aid efforts.”²⁹ The approach taken here is to focus more on politics and ideology while recognising that technology and institutions serve as vehicles of these more normative or soft political aspects.

29 Deborah Bräutigam, *Chinese aid and African development* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 30.

Indeed, the interest in these dimensions is to the extent that material aspects assist in the assertion of powerful political ideas.

2.3 International Relations as Intercultural Relations³⁰

In this thesis, two notions of 'culture' are discussed. A social constructivist notion of 'systemic cultures' refers to shared norms and dialogue on an international level. This comes close to the concept of international regimes, not institutionalised on the level of international organisations, yet still entrenched through repeated interaction, or 'collective identity formation' among international actors.³¹

This section will argue for the importance of considering culture on the level of actors in international relations. These actors mostly constitute nation states, though not exclusively, as in this thesis we also look at a supranational actor, the European Union. It is befitting the purposes of this thesis to look at culture in the ideational sense, where norms are of great importance. Here, following Peter Katzenstein, 'culture' "denotes collective models of nation-state authority or identity, carried by custom or law."³² It includes norms and values, "evaluative standards", as well as rules and models "cognitive standards" – these define how social actors function in a system.³³ Culture can also be understood as something that helps in "organising experience" and "guiding the behaviour" of a particular social group.³⁴ In the context of this essay, this applies broadly to respective Chinese and European cultures and more specifically to norms and meanings that underlie their respective political development.

International relations theory is heavily criticised because it is essentially based on assumptions made observing inter-European international life, notwithstanding the fact that modern European history does not represent quintessential international relations.³⁵ European political

30 Adda Bozeman (1994) qtd. in Chen, "The Practice of the Mean," 85.

31 Ruggie and Kratochwil, "International regimes"; Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

32 Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultures of National Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 6.

33 Ibid.

34 Neil J. Smelser, 1995, in Mingjiang Li, "Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature," in *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, ed. Mingjiang Li, (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009), 7.

35 Acharya and Buzan, "Why is there no non-Western IR theory?," 197.

culture must not be taken for granted as international political culture simply because it is hegemonic. Linked to Eurocentrism and adding to the difficulty in addressing culture, are the universalistic assumptions that underly social science. According to Immanuel Wallerstein, “universalism is the view that there exist scientific truths that are valid across all of time and space.”³⁶ From the post-Renaissance period, through the Enlightenment until today science has become “the most important mode of knowledge and the arbiter of social discourse” in European culture, it should be emphasised.³⁷ The idea that knowledge derived through experimentation is applicable everywhere, is heavily supported by the idea of the (social) scientist as a value-neutral observer. Thus, Wallerstein's belief that this assumption must be broken in order for Eurocentrism in social science to be overcome – which is an essential process if we are to aim for global approaches to international life as opposed to Eurocentric assumptions cast upon the rest of the globe.³⁸ To this end, World History makes a conscious effort at decentralising global narratives, cognisant of the pervasiveness of Eurocentrism. In addition, post-colonial theory identifies and isolates Europe's political recipes as “ethno-historical accomplishments limited to the specific settings in which they had first appeared.”³⁹

An example of a pervasive universalistic assumption that essentialises and overlooks the importance of culture is the idea that all human beings behave according to rational choice, including the assumption of individual self-interest. Rational choice assumes that all issues are conceived as interests (on an individual level), thus choices can be simply calculated – however it is also possible that issues be interpreted in relation to beliefs (often accompanied with a sense of accountability to a societal whole), which reduces and complicates choice sets.⁴⁰ Thus, the

36 Immanuel Wallerstein, “Eurocentrism and its Avatars: The Dilemmas of Social Science,” *New Left Review*, no. 226 (December 1997): 96.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., 94-95.

39 Paul Gilroy, “Multiculturalism and Post-colonial theory,” in *Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, ed. John S. Dryzek, Bonnie Honig, and Anne Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 661.

40 R. Bin Wong, “Detecting the Significance of Place,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 545.

importance in understanding that when interests and beliefs are fused, rational choice becomes less useful in analysis. We must recognise the European genealogy of rational choice in order to place it firmly as a part of European culture, without assuming that it automatically extends further. Simply because European science has developed and operated on the basis of a self-interested version of human nature does not mean that this automatically applies to the whole of humanity.

Especially with the rise of Southern powers and the shift towards a multipolar, regionalist global order, a more global approach requires the accounting of diverse perspectives. This why the flexibility of social constructivism is essential for this thesis, as its analysis focuses on two culturally different international actors, and their respective development policies towards a region, sub-Saharan Africa, where political culture oscillates between embedded Westernisation of the colonial period and the search for African authenticity in the post-colonial present.⁴¹ Furthermore, with the incorporation of culture on the actor level in the theoretical framework of this thesis, we can better assess the differences between China and the EU, and their respective political cultures and conceptions of global order, both of which inform their views on development.

It is important to account for the role of culture and values in any given country's foreign policy.⁴² This applies not simply to advocacy of political values, but more fundamentally to the meaning and construction of interests that emerge from culture, values and self-understanding, among other things. While theoretical approaches such as rational choice (including realism) and Marxism avoid culture, we must not forget that culture is *essential* to the political.⁴³ A look at culture and values can help in understanding a diverse array of actors and how these also incorporate certain social principles or normative guidelines on how

41 Adda Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History*, Second. (London: Transaction Publishers, 1994), xvii. For more on African postcolonial struggles with Westernisation, and the search for authenticity, see V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana university press, 1988).

42 Li, "Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature," 6.

43 Michael Thompson, Marco Verweij, and Richard Ellis J., "Why and How Culture Matters," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 319-320.

power should be exercised.⁴⁴ Bozeman emphasises that, in determining what one can expect from a state and society, one must identify its cultural infrastructure.⁴⁵

What will now be introduced is a brief, but important theory that will help in differentiating between what kind of 'social solidarities' cultures tend towards. This theory is 'constrained relativism', which brings together “cultural biases, patterns of social relations and behavioural strategies as a form of social solidarity” and attempts to “distinguish similarities and differences across cultures in terms of a small number of universally valid forms of social solidarity.”⁴⁶ These four basic forms of social solidarity are: fatalism, individualism, egalitarianism, and hierarchy. Fatalistic and individualistic cultures are characterised by unaccountability, and unfettered competition while egalitarian and hierarchical are characterised by accountability and fettered competition. This provides for a basic framework, free of value judgements, through which to analyse fundamental characteristics of different cultural structures. Émile Durkheim emphasised the importance of beliefs and values as “essential components of economic, ecological, demographic, organisational and political explanations.”⁴⁷ Constrained relativism helps in accounting for important structural aspects of culture, its impact on policy and potentially, compatibility in cross-cultural interactions.

44 Li, “Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature,” 7.

45 Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History*, xli.

46 Thompson, Verweij, and Ellis, “Why and How Culture Matters,” 324-325.

47 Ibid., 324.

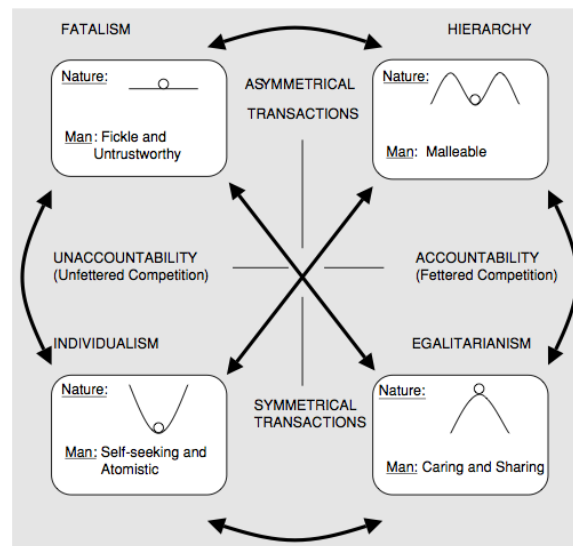


Figure 1 “The proper typology according to the theory of constrained relativism”⁴⁸

Important structural questions about culture can be at least partly addressed through the above typology. One such example is the differing emphases on rights in Europe and China, where in the former individual rights are emphasised, while in the latter communitarian rights are held in greatest importance.⁴⁹ European culture tends towards individualism, where people are relatively unaccountable to one another, and where the emphasis on the individual has led to the safeguarding of individual rights by the state. Chinese culture tends towards hierarchy, with accountability reinforced through the family, and where the interests of the society (and therefore the state) come before those of the individual.

An emphasis on culture will help this thesis in having a more nuanced understanding of the different environments in which Chinese and European development policy originate, as well as the African environment for which they have been envisioned. With consideration to culture, we must overcome basic assumptions about political structure and interests. A great example to this effect is offered by Pye, where he observes “Chinese politics are not about left vs. right, but about conflicts in institutional hierarchy.”⁵⁰ Even the realm of ideological competition,

48 Douglas (1978); Gross and Rayner (1985); Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky (1990) qtd in Ibid., 329.

49 Suisheng Zhao, “The Prospect of China’s Soft Power: How sustainable?,” in *Soft Power: China’s Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, ed. Mingjiang Li (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009), 261.

50 Lucian W. Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China’s Political Cultures* (Ann Arbor: Center for

central to Western liberal democratic political systems, cannot be simply assumed. Now that an approach that incorporates culture has been established, soft power will be discussed.

2.4 Soft Power, Norms, Hegemony and Discourse

An important concept in looking at the spread of norms globally is that of 'soft power.' Coined by Joseph S. Nye, soft power is: “the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment” that relies on “resources of culture, values and policies.”⁵¹ This is differentiated from hard power which often uses military power or other forms of coercion. Soft power is important for us here as it underlies the use of political norms which are tied to the resources of culture, values and policies. Soft power is an important concept not only theoretically, it also forms an important part of foreign policy self-perception for both the People's Republic of China and the European Union.

In discussing differing notions of soft power in international relations, this section will begin by looking at theories related to the normative power of the European Union, including 'civilian power', 'soft imperialism' and 'Normative Power Europe.' The theory of 'soft use of power', emerging out of the Chinese soft power literature, will then be discussed. Finally we will look at more philosophical perspectives on discourse, power and (cultural) hegemony.

In light of the previous section on culture, it is important to remember that norms and culture are intertwined, thus the spread of one entails the spread of the other. Though European political norms make universalistic claims, and despite being the basis of much of the current international system, they have still been developed in a culturally-specific context. From a social constructivist perspective, the system is malleable, thus the prevalence of European thinking within it, does not

Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1988), 39.

51 Joseph S. Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008): 94.

mean that other systemic cultures cannot emerge, especially as we head towards a multipolar world.

Fredrik Söderbaum and Björn Hettne identify two ways in which the European Union acts as a global actor: through civilian power and soft imperialism, respectively. 'Civilian power' emphasises the promotion of norms through "voluntary dialogue and consensus-building" with various international counterparts.⁵² This is the case, especially when the EU and respective regional counterparts are relatively equal in terms of perceived power. Such relative equals include ASEM, the Asia-Europe Meeting and MERCOSUR, the Southern Common Market of South America.⁵³

'Soft imperialism', on the other hand, represents an uneven or asymmetric relationship which includes the imposition of norms and conditionalities.⁵⁴ Thus, it can be seen as "soft power applied in a hard way" where self-interest (on the part of the EU, or other imposing power) trumps genuine dialogue. This exists with weaker counterparts, including sub-Saharan African regions within the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) inter-regional framework. Because the imposition of norms entails the imposition of culture, it is possible to think of soft imperialism as bordering on cultural imperialism, something that will be discussed along with the soft use of power approach.

Both civilian power and soft imperialism are important in different ways. Through interregional dialogues including (economically powerful) China, and East Asia more generally (ASEM), the EU focusses itself more on the economic dimension while restraining important political norms such as democracy, good governance, and the rule of law.⁵⁵ Thus, inasmuch as China is concerned, a civilian power approach is taken, where the EU has a stance reflecting a dialogue of equals, with minimal

52 Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, "Civilian power or soft imperialism? The EU as a global power and the role of interregionalism," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 10 (2005): 549.

53 Ibid., 535-552 (p. 549).

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., 545.

imposition of European cultural norms and values. In terms of the EU's relations, both bilateral and regional with sub-Saharan Africa (within the ACP framework), the approach tends much more to the imposition of political norms, often tied to economic and development agreements.⁵⁶ Here soft imperialism tells us more of the story and gives a theoretical framework through which to analyse the EU's development relations with Africa, indeed towards the end of testing whether those uneven relations may be challenged in some way by increased Chinese involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa. Söderbaum and Hettne emphasise that while the option of civilian power is always available to the EU in its external relations, soft imperialism relies on a stable relative power position of the EU vis-à-vis its counterpart (in this case, sub-Saharan Africa).⁵⁷ The question of Chinese impact on EU development policy in Africa can thus be framed by asking whether the promotion of a different and possibly competing set of norms surrounding development, backed by real economic (investment and infrastructure) power, may jeopardize the EU's soft imperialist position in imposing its political norms regarding development on sub-Saharan African countries.

Ian Manners' Normative Power Europe thesis is another important approach to analysing the ability of the European Union to propagate its universal values globally. The EU's international role is informed by its internally constructed identity, formed by core and minor norms which thus form an essential part of its normative power globally.⁵⁸ This conforms with Wendt and Lancaster's respective ideas on how internal political identity/structure affect external priorities more generally, and development policy more specifically.⁵⁹ Manners argues that the EU's status as a unique actor in international relations is informed by a normative difference coming from its "historical context, hybrid polity, and political-legal constitution."⁶⁰ Indeed, Buzan and Little assert that the

56 Ibid., 551.

57 Ibid., 550.

58 Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002): 238.

59 Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*; Lancaster, *Foreign Aid*.

60 Ibid. "Normative Power Europe," 241.

EU represents “a new type of entity with actor quality” which “is experimenting with a new form of both unit and subsystem structure.”⁶¹ The constitutive nature of the EU informs how it acts both between and beyond the member states. Manners identifies five core norms forming the EU's normative basis: peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights; Complemented by four minor norms: social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance.⁶² These are the fundamentals of the creation of this Union of nation states, its expansion, and indeed its foreign relations. As will be analysed in the chapter on European Union and Development Hegemony, these norms form core European cultural norms and are extremely important in EU development policy, notably democracy, the rule of law, and good governance, as well as political and civil human rights.

Manners identifies several important processes through which EU norms are diffused globally. The most important for us are 'informational diffusion', influence through strategic and declaratory communications; 'procedural diffusion', institutionalisation of a relationship between the EU and a third party; 'transference', exchange of goods, trade, aid or technology which assist the exportation of EU norms, often through conditionalities; and 'cultural filter', where EU efforts on pushing international norms cause political learning “in third states leading to learning, adaptation, or rejection of norms.”⁶³ These processes of norm diffusion are important in terms of assessing EU soft power influence on discourses of development and on African states.

Li Mingjiang attempts to reconceptualise Nye's concept of soft power, by focusing more on how a state uses all of its resources of power, instead of focusing on soft power resources themselves. Li proposes a 'soft use of power' theory which involves the “prudent use of all sources of power available in certain social relationships.”⁶⁴ This theory

61 Buzan and Little (2000) qtd. in Ibid. Ibid., 240.

62 Ibid., 242.

63 Ibid., 245.

64 Li, “Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature,” 3.

also breaks the boundary between domestic and international politics as it emphasises “domestic political values, institutions, and political system are important considerations for a states' soft power.”⁶⁵ While culture is accounted for as a material factor in Nye's theory, Li recognises how China's soft power is intertwined with its culture. That is to say that cultural factors including political values and priorities as well as traditions are all important in understanding Chinese foreign policy and strategy.⁶⁶

Li's emphasis on prudence is itself based on China's approach to external relations, as will be examined in much more depth in the China chapter, which will address culture and development policy. It is emphasised that if all resources of power are used “in a prudent, cautious, accommodating and considerate approach” positive reciprocity from other states will follow.⁶⁷ The recognition by the Chinese leadership of the importance of soft power reflects the reality that “tangible military and economic power along is no longer sufficient for a nation to project its might in international affairs.”⁶⁸

Western dominance of “discourse, institutions, and rules” in international relations meant that the theory of soft power was initially developed as a Western concept.⁶⁹ To widen the applicability of soft power, culture must not be treated simply as a resource of soft power, but as integral to the construction of the soft use of power, just as it is integral to the construction of the actor itself. China's cultural and historical background includes norms and values compatible with soft power.⁷⁰ Such concepts include the Golden Mean (balance in the universe, respect for difference, achieving mutually acceptable agreements) in social relations which leads to one of the most important of Confucian goals: harmony.⁷¹ While these are not-issue based, nor are they ideological, as will be demonstrated in the chapter on China, these

65 Ibid., 9.

66 Ibid., 10.

67 Ibid., 7.

68 Zhao, “Prospect of China's Soft Power,” 248.

69 Yong Deng, “The New Hard Realities: ‘Soft Power’ and China in Transition,” in *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, ed. Mingjiang Li (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009), 65.

70 Chen, “The Practice of the Mean,” 83.

71 Ibid., 84-90.

and other Chinese cultural, traditional and philosophical norms are integral not only to its soft power, but into its foreign policy as a whole.⁷²

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci lays out the notion that elites “for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination” impose a conception of the world upon the masses that is not of their own making.⁷³ In a societal context, this entails hegemony. Robert W. Cox applies Gramsci’s conception of hegemony to the interpretation of international order. Cox first links world hegemony with the outward expansion of hegemonic domestic social orders, encompassing social, economic, and political structures.⁷⁴ “World hegemony... is expressed in universal norms, institutions and mechanisms which lay down general rules of behaviour for states and for those forces of civil society that act across national boundaries...”⁷⁵ His concept of world orders, “the particular configurations of forces which successively define the problematic of war and peace for the ensemble of states” is also important, as hegemony represents “a coherent conjunction or fit between a configuration of material power, the prevalent collective image of the world order (including certain norms) and a set of institutions which administer the order with a certain semblance of universality.”⁷⁶ Cox argues that international institutions play a vital role in legitimating domestic institutions and practices, in line with the interests of the hegemonic order. This is essential, as the hegemonic development discourse, operationalised by the European Union, is also forwarded by such international institutions as the International Monetary Fund, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, among others.

From hegemony, we now shift to knowledge and power as they relate to discourse. Power relations within discourses are an important subject in

72 Li, “Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature,” 2.

73 Antonio Gramsci, “From the Prison Notebooks,” in *Cultural resistance reader*, ed. Stephen Duncombe (London: Verso, 2002), 62.

74 Robert W. Cox, “Gramsci, Hegemony, and International Relations: An Essay in Method,” *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 12, no. 2 (1983): 171-172.

75 Ibid., 172.

76 Robert W. Cox, “Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory,” *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 10, no. 2 (1981): 138-139.

the work of Michel Foucault. Foucault's relevant ideas, applicable to our investigation on norms and hegemony in international relations, are especially outlined in his work *Power/Knowledge*. 'Power', according to Foucault, is implemented through the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a coherent discourse.⁷⁷ This discourse, and thus the power it engenders, exists not as a localised phenomenon, but rather as a discursive chain. The applicability of these ideas to normative discourse is thus apparent. Foucault emphasises the “ascent of power that is tied to scientific knowledges” and thus how disciplines themselves represent apparatuses of knowledge, restricted, and unevenly powerful.⁷⁸ Discourses are identified as ideological productions, where major mechanisms of power eventually promote the propagation of norms. More specifically referred by Foucault as a 'society of normalisation', this concept bears great importance for the hegemonic development discourse, and also to the overall spreading of norms by global actors such as the EU.⁷⁹

Powerful discourses build upon themselves. Thus, the idea of 'regimes of truth' is important when applying Foucault's ideas in the international political realm, as only ideas and norms that adhere to these regimes carry with them political legitimacy. It follows that Foucault calls for the insurrection of “subjugated knowledges”, that is, knowledges that somehow lie beneath a required level of legitimacy, and whose historical contents are buried and disguised.⁸⁰ Thus, 'archaeology' as a methodology for analysis of subordinate discourses, and 'genealogy' as a tactic for releasing subjected knowledges, is advocated.⁸¹ Especially important here is Foucault's elaboration on his conception of 'genealogy'

*measures the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects.*⁸²

77 Michel Foucault, “Power/Knowledge,” in *Classics of Political and Moral Philosophy*, ed. Steven M. Cahn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1107.

78 Ibid., 1114.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid., 1103.

81 Ibid., 1104.

82 Ibid.

Essentially what Foucault is advocating is a disposition, and a methodology, that refuses to trivialise the importance of knowledge coming from outside hegemonic discourses (or regimes of truth). This is a practical end to the philosophical realisation of “the centralising powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organised scientific discourse.”⁸³ These ideas are especially important for this thesis as we are dealing with an aspect of international political culture, the development discourse, which carries with it norms that are central to its legitimacy. It is often through discourse that these norms are reinforced and thus when thinking of the exchange of political ideas surrounding development between global actors such as the EU and China, we can reflect upon the discursive power relations that exist within that relationship. This is especially important in the context of development, which has largely been a conception of the West. As we will investigate in the next chapter on the EU and the hegemonic development discourse, this regime of truth relies on political norms that are forwarded by the West, and to varying degrees, contested in the developing world.

2.5 Synthesis

In this chapter it has been addressed, how international actors at their core can be analysed as 'ideational' in nature. This can be achieved through social constructivist analysis. Building upon how interests are ideas, norms emerge as an important part of respective actors' foreign policies and play an important part in the conception of cultures within the international system. This concept of different 'systemic cultures' is important as it emphasises that the structures of the international system can indeed be dynamic, thus they are contestable, and they can indeed be transformed. The importance of ideas and norms within the global system has been addressed generally. Furthermore that centrality of norms has been discussed as a key component of the global discourse around development, which can be defined by the dominant or

83 Ibid.

hegemonic Western culture that defines this aspect of the international system.

The hegemony of Western culture within the world order and within the development discourse that is an extension thereof, presents the importance in adding culture to this theoretical framework. An emphasis on culture also enables us to view international relations on the basis of more complex social interactions, where diverse conceptions of the political collective, interests, world order and even ideology emphasise international relations as being intercultural relations.⁸⁴ To the end of understanding differing social solidarities in diverse political cultural spheres, constrained relativism helps in portraying fundamental distinctions between culture that affect the societal whole. As development policy is an extension of domestic politics, these cultural distinctions prove important for the study of global political discourse in a multipolar world. Building upon the conception that political actors are socially constructed, cultural norms and meanings help in understanding the construction of foreign policy generally, and development policy more particularly. The cultural lens provides a powerful antidote to Eurocentrism in international relations and universalism in social science more generally. It is also in keeping with the aims of postcolonial studies and of world history in contextualising the European experience, and opening up space for historical and political narratives beyond Europe, and indeed beyond the hegemonic liberal international order.

The division of the section of soft power between European and Chinese approaches demonstrates the importance of the political actor in applying theory. For the European Union soft power demonstrates the complexity of the spread of norms in international relations, and the importance of relative power in discerning to what extent those norms are proliferated coercively, or through consent. Norms can be spread rather coercively within the context of an uneven power relation, i.e. 'soft imperialism', whereas in the context of relatively even power relations a 'civilian power' approach is used. Both contexts are important in terms of understanding the European Union's civilian power vis-à-vis

84 Adda Bozeman (1994) qtd. in Chen, "The Practice of the Mean," 85.

the European Union versus its soft imperialism towards sub-Saharan Africa.

The importance of culture is again emphasised with the soft use of power approach which more reflects Chinese foreign policy. This allows for the emphasis of norms and traditions in social relations as having an important impact on how foreign and development policies are formulated and exerted. Whereas political ideals arguably have the greatest impact on European normative priorities, as will be demonstrated in the China chapter, as Chinese political culture moves beyond ideology, priorities such as peace and harmony are not basic foreign policy goals, they are an extension of Chinese cultural values that also correspond well with the notion of soft power. The soft use of power approach is important as it assesses an international actors' soft power based on more than simply the soft power materials or assets they possess. Soft use of power is about how, on the whole, power is used in a prudent way in social relationships.

Hegemony is an important concept for this thesis as it entails that general rules and behaviours (read norms) are laid out through means including global institutions, shaped by the dominant world order. As the European Union forms a part of that dominant order, and as its development policy is also part and parcel of that order, this concept is crucial in understanding the context within which China conducts its foreign relations in Africa. This is where regimes of truth are also important, as they are formed of self-legitimizing discourses created by the powerful. As China's conception of global order is contrasted with the European Union's, it is important to recognise from the outset the uneven (political) power relation as the EU forms a part of the hegemonic global order more generally, and the hegemonic development discourse more specifically.

The ideas discussed throughout this theoretical section will be applied to both actors in assessing their relative soft power, the norms and conceptions of world order that they seek to promote, emphasising that they are socially constructed actors, and that culture matters in understanding their respective societal and therefore development

priorities.

Chapter Three: Western Hegemony and EU Development Policy

3.1 Introduction

The European Union as a normative power was discussed in the first chapter. An explicit goal of the EU is to spread democratic political norms globally, as well as to encourage regional integration based on democratic norms and free market-based economic development. One of the key factors to effective normative power for the EU is having a coherent discourse. As far as development is concerned, there is a relatively high level of consensus among the 27 member countries vis-à-vis other policy areas. This section will discuss the EU's political goals through its development assistance policy towards Africa. Its development policy will be shown to be consistent with the 'hegemonic' development discourse as established by Western liberal democratic countries and international financial institutions.

The chapter will begin by discussing what exactly constitutes the 'hegemonic development discourse', as largely stated by scholars of post-development. This has influenced the attachment of political and economic conditionalities to development aid and assistance emanating from Western countries and international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB). The strong influence of neoliberal economic ideas in the contemporary development establishment, as well as the extension of democratic institutions to the global South, will be discussed.

After defining the 'hegemonic' development discourse, EU development policies will then be discussed, especially towards determining the extent to which they themselves are consistent with the contemporary development establishment. This section will also be important in highlighting the EU's most important political goals through its development relations with sub-Saharan African countries. The EU's priorities will be determined in the areas of political conditionalities, and

regional integration, which largely focuses on economic liberalisation. Ultimately, demonstrating the EU's development priorities in sub-Saharan Africa will provide the basis for assessing the extent to which China's increasing involvement affects the EU's goals on the political level.

3.2 Development Hegemony

It is in the context of ideas of (cultural) hegemony from Gramsci and of regimes of truth from Foucault that the 'hegemonic development discourse' will now be discussed. The European Union resides within the hegemonic world order, and the ideas that form the basis of European (liberal democratic) nation states are further legitimised by global institutions and standards produced by the West more broadly. This represents a continuation of Western imperialism in discursive and institutional senses. A major part of this world order is the propagation Western universalist cultural norms, which are also furthered by the European Union. Political ideologies emerging out of Western cultural priorities will then be discussed as a means of fully establishing what is meant here by 'development hegemony'.

It is essential to discuss 'development hegemony' at the outset of the thesis for several reasons. Firstly, the assessment on China's impact on political discourse concerning development requires first an understanding of the norms forwarded by the present dominant discourse. Secondly, it will be argued that the hegemonic development discourse essentially amounts to the 'gospel' of Western, liberal democratic nations. By 'gospel' I mean that this discourse contains within it the essential features that Western political culture seeks to proliferate, if not impose, on the world at large both discursively and institutionally. Thus, the norms advocated in this discourse provide a view not only on the domestic politics of Europe, they also shed light on the universalist cultural priorities of the continent, and of the West.

The hegemonic development discourse more broadly reflects the approach to development as advocated by the 'traditional donors' in sub-

Saharan Africa.⁸⁵ These donors, all possessing liberal democratic political systems, define the norms, institutions and legitimate political discourse of the present world order. Thus, this chapter will take on perspectives from the post-development school, whose criticism of the so-called development discourse has revealed the kind of power relations that exist in the production of knowledge that informs development policy. This is evident in that the 'legitimate' liberal (democratic) international norms forwarded by the hegemonic world order often form the basis of the externalisation of responsibility for development-related policies. This is an application of Foucault's 'regimes of truth' concept discussed above, with an example being the EU justifying a move towards neoliberal trade policy based on the policies of a 'legitimate' international organisation (e.g. the World Trade Organisation).⁸⁶ It is the regime of truth around development that will now be discussed, with emphasis on the EU's integral role within that regime.

Core European (Union) norms were discussed in the theoretical chapter (Chapter 2), which Manners identifies as peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights. With minor norms including: social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance.⁸⁷ These are not important only in European sense, they are also viewed as applicable to the world at large. This equates universalism on the part of European development policy, and that of the West more broadly.

The reconfiguration of European culture beginning with the Renaissance, through the Enlightenment was characterised by the removal of a traditional, feudalistic, religious, collective past towards a modern, democratic, secular and individualistic future. The French Revolution was a major break with the past, as it signalled the abolition of more collective conceptions of rights for a more individual

85 The 'traditional donors' include Western European and North American nations, as well as Japan. All of these countries consist of liberal democratic political institutions, and varying levels of market liberalisation under the precepts of neoliberalism, to be elaborated below.

86 See pages 51-52 below.

87 Manners, "Normative Power Europe," 242.

conception.⁸⁸ The values of modern, secular Europe, conceived for the world at large, were the Liberty, Equality and Fraternity of the French Revolution. These are exemplified today as democracy, social equality, and humanist universalism.⁸⁹ Such values are considered to be modern, with modernity itself originating in the West.⁹⁰

Therefore, histories of Eurocentrism, universalism, and the propagation of a Western, modern vision for the world are strongly linked to the concomitant growth of capitalism in Europe and its expansionist push resulting in colonialism.⁹¹ Europe's conception of modernity was pushed forward by scientific progress and its service to productivity, to the creation of a secular society, encompassing aspiration for democracy.⁹² Samir Amin argues that capitalism had an objective need for a scientific explanation of evolution of all human societies as well as being a project for the future of all of humanity.⁹³

The West's self-perception was of possessing a political, economic and social model to be imitated by all, especially in adopting its “miracle recipe” of the market and democracy.⁹⁴ This led to the idea of 'Eurocentric developmentalism' with Europe at the centre of the 'myth of modernity' where “European civilisation understands itself as the most developed, the superior civilisation... [this] sense of superiority obliges it.. to 'develop'... underdeveloped civilisations.”⁹⁵ Thus, Europe's self perception as the most advanced culture, with its underlying universalistic tendencies, helped push for the propagation of European norms, values, institutions and behaviours worldwide. Blaut refers to Eurocentrism as “the coloniser's model of the world” which constitutes a “super theory” for what societies should look like worldwide.⁹⁶ An interrelated concept is 'Eurocentric diffusionism', which assumes that

88 Samir Amin, *L'eurocentrisme: critique d'un idéologie* (Paris: Anthropos, 1988), 5.

89 Ibid., 6.

90 Jürgen Kocka, “Multiple Modernities and Negotiated Universals,” in *Reflections on multiple modernities: European, Chinese, and other interpretations*, ed. Dominic Sachsenmeier, Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, and Jens Riedel (Cologne: Brill, 2002), 119.

91 Amin, *L'eurocentrisme*, 9.

92 Ibid., 51.

93 Ibid., 6.

94 Ibid.

95 Enrique Dussell, “Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures),” *Boundary 2* 20, no. 3 (1993): 75.

96 J.M. Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (London: The Guilford Press, 1993), 10-11.

“Europe naturally progresses and modernises” while “Non-Europe naturally remains stagnant, unchanging, traditional, and backward.”⁹⁷ Accordingly, European models must be exported in order to further the project of modernity.⁹⁸

The 'developmentalist' and 'diffusionist' tendencies of European culture, with universalistic cultural norms, have manifested themselves since the second half of the 20th Century in processes of 'modernisation'. This approach covers a broad spectrum of transformations: social, cultural, economic and political:

*[modernisation] stressed as 'normal' the interrelatedness between, for example, the emergence of capitalism, industrialisation, the rise of liberal democratic structures, the building of the nation state, the emergence of pluralist society and social relations built on achievement, the advancement of science, certain personality structures, certain belief systems and states of mind.*⁹⁹

Thus, modernisation can be viewed as a later justification for the proliferation of European cultural norms worldwide. It is important to specify the European origin of notions of modernity, tied with individualism, liberal democracy, and capitalism because it is precisely due to Eurocentrism that these conditions are assumed to be applicable to the world at large. In essence, this attempt to universalise the European experience denies other regions their right to cultural specificity. This again reflects the Western tendency towards cultural imperialism, due to the self-perception of Europe and the West at large as being the most developed societies, for all to emulate, and imitate in order to achieve a similar status. Next under discussion will be important concepts of the hegemonic development discourse emerging out of European culture: good governance, neoliberalism, and the nation-state. Good governance ties into Eurocentric socio-political priorities, while neoliberalism more addresses politico-economic priorities, all of which should be contained within the structures of the modern nation-state, also developed in Europe.

97 Ibid., 14-15.

98 The ideas of Eurocentric developmentalism and Eurocentric diffusionism can also be linked to cultural perspectives encapsulated in the *mission civilatrice* concept, or Rudyard Kipling's famous poem *The White Man's Burden*.

99 Kocka, “Multiple Modernities,” 120.

The pervasiveness of neoliberalism in development policy is a phenomenon that has been well-documented since the 1980s.¹⁰⁰ Neoliberalism forms a hegemonic ideology in the broader international political economy. That very international political economy *drives* the ideas behind development. Neoliberalism has become so mainstream that within development, the adoption of neoliberal policies equates economic development, and demonstrating that within 'development hegemony' the western-created consensus on development focusses mostly on economic development.

*Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.*¹⁰¹

Within this ideological turn, governments are encouraged to remove themselves as much as possible from direct intervention in the economy, rather taking on a new role as arbiters of the market. This reduced role, furthered by the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, leads to a lessened role for the state both commercially and in terms of social provision, while focussing on an increased role in guaranteeing such things as private property rights, and “the quality and integrity of money.”¹⁰² State capacity in ensuring private property rights, as well as the kind of stable environment that encourages foreign direct investment (FDI), includes strong legal structures, as well as strengthened security through military and police forces.¹⁰³

The advocacy of neoliberalism in the context of development forms a major part of the so-called 'Washington Consensus'. This promoted market-led as opposed to state-led development through government inflation control and deficit reduction; liberalisation of the national market to trade and capital; and the privatisation and deregulation of the

100 Jan Nederveen Pieterse, “My Paradigm or Yours? Alternative Development, Post-Development, Reflexive Development,” *Development and Change* 29 (1998): 349.

101 David Harvey, *A brief history of neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

domestic market.¹⁰⁴ The failure of the implementation of these ideas through structural adjustment policies in sub-Saharan Africa, forced for a reconceptualisation of the Washington Consensus. Joseph Stiglitz, then Vice President and Chief Economist of the World Bank proposed a post-Washington Consensus where “the state has an important role to play in appropriate regulation, industrial policy, social protection and welfare.”¹⁰⁵ The return of focus on the state in the hegemonic development discourse would especially emphasise the regulatory role of the state, also emphasising other capacities, under the auspices of 'good governance'.

Centrepieces of EU development policy have been the interrelated political, good governance aspect, as well as the advocacy of neoliberal economic policies. The dominant concept of *good governance* can be defined as a technocratic approach aiming for “efficiency, authority and accountability of the state” through “enhancing a sound economic climate, transparency and the rule of law, and tackling corruption are considered the most important mechanisms.”¹⁰⁶ This political reform is aimed principally at creating a favourable economic environment, while human rights are protected by a strengthened legal system. However, the first function of the legal system in this model is to protect private property rights in order to defend the neoliberal economic policies that will be discussed below. There is a clear interrelation between neoliberalism and good governance, as advocated by the traditional development donors. As good governance relates to the rule of law, limiting corruption, and creating a regulatory state capable of facilitating a mostly private market, its goals are very much intertwined with the free market capitalistic aims of neoliberalism. Indeed, “good governance means a democratic capitalist regime, presided over by a minimal state

104 Charles Gore, “The Rise and Fall of the Washington Consensus as a Paradigm for Developing Countries,” *World Development* 28, no. 5 (2000): 798-804.

105 Stiglitz (1998) qtd. in Ben Fine, Cosas Lapavistas, and Jonathan Pincus, eds., *Development Policy in the Twenty-First Century: beyond the post-Washington consensus* (London: Routledge, 2006), 3.

106 Leftwich (1993) qtd. in Jolle Demmers, Alex E. Fernández Jilberto, and Barbara Hogenboom, “Good Governance and democracy in a world of neoliberal regimes,” in *Good governance in the era of global neoliberalism: conflict and depolitisation in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa*, ed. Jolle Demmers, Alex E. Fernández Jilberto, and Barbara Hogenboom (London: Routledge, 2004), 2.

which is also part of the wider governance of the New World Order”.¹⁰⁷

Post-development theorists refer to the hegemonic situation of western political and academic knowledge as a key component of the so-called 'development apparatus'.¹⁰⁸ The nation-state is also a central concept in the West, which is reinforced by the involvement of the most developed forms of nation states in the development of the global South. The strength of each nation-state in this world remains as the highest indicator for a society's performance, and ultimately its integration into globalisation. The search for centrality and legitimacy in the modern world both begins and ends with the creation of a mono-cultural form: a nation-state.¹⁰⁹ Firstly, as outlined by Max Weber, a 'nation-state' is an entity which has the monopoly on violence within a particular territory. “exclusive political authority exercised...over a given territory.”¹¹⁰ These were the original criteria for the Westphalian nation-state, as defined by the Treaty of Westphalia, signed in 1648. The nation-state concept has become much more complex than these basic components, as it has developed alongside liberal democracy to include representative democracy, strong institutions from legal and political affairs, to the economy, and social welfare. While the nation-state has been in concert with various forms of capitalist economy, that advocated in the context of development today is more laissez-faire, or neoliberal.¹¹¹

Though it was only really implemented in Europe in the 19th Century, and throughout the global South through the imposition of the colonial state, the Western-style nation-state has managed to suppress virtually all other forms of political organisation, especially in the realm of legitimacy. This is part of what Ashis Nandy terms: “Colonization of the

107 Ibid., 3.

108 See James Ferguson, *The Anti Politics Machine. Development, Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

109 Rajni Kothari, “The Agony of the Modern State,” in *The Post-Development Reader*, ed. Majid Rahnema (London: Zed Books, 1997), 144.

110 John Agnew, “Sovereignty Regimes: Territoriality and State Authority in World Politics,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95, no. 2 (2005): 437-461.

111 The definition used here is loosely based on Rajni Kothari's conception of the “bourgeois democratic liberal institutional model of the state” that he discusses in Kothari, “Agony of the Modern State,” 144.

Mind.”¹¹² Especially during 19th Century colonising missions, buttressed by rational-scientific Enlightenment liberalism, traditional values were swept away by universalism as it was applied to political organisation.¹¹³ This kind of thinking persists until today, where traditional life is assumed to be static, and modern to be dynamic. This kind of trajectory which, reflective of a modern European cultural perspective, imagining a logical, progressive path: “from poverty, barbarianism, despotism, and ignorance to riches, civilization, democracy and rationality, the highest expression of which is science.”¹¹⁴ The nation-state, scientific thinking, and the market “have been the great universalizing powers” delivering Western structures and decimating traditional systems.¹¹⁵

The concept of the nation-state, and the neoliberal and good governance ideas that apply to it, has always been quintessentially Western. The Westphalian nation state's structures emerged out of a chaotic period in Europe's history, with liberal democratic norms and the concomitant growth of capitalism as key factors in the development of the nation-state. This kind of approach demonstrates that political systems are intertwined with society and culture, and have developed as such. As the concept of the nation-state is a function of Western culture, it is often this concept that gives way to culture in the developing world.¹¹⁶ Often the incompatibility of Western development policies is imperceptible, because Western conceptions of political organisation are so deeply embedded in the development discourse. Concepts such as neoliberal economics and the liberal democratic political system, furthered by good governance, are not questionable within the development discourse, despite many failures in their application in the global South. The unquestioned nature of these ideas reflects what I

112 Ashis Nandy, “Colonization of the Mind,” in *The Post-Development Reader* (London: Zed Books, 1997), 168-178.

113 Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, “Modernisation and The Politics of Communalism: a Theoretical Perspective,” *The American Political Science Review* 64, no. 4 (1970).

114 Teodor Shanin, “The Idea of Progress,” in *The Post-Development Reader*, ed. Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree (London: Zed Books, 1997), 65.

115 Wolfgang Sachs, “Introduction,” in *The Development Dictionary*, ed. Wolfgang Sachs (London: Zed Books, 1992), 4.

116 Ashis Nandy, “State,” in *The Development Dictionary*, ed. Wolfgang Sachs (London: Zed Books, 1992), 264.

have termed, 'development hegemony'.

The use and often imposition of political norms, values and institutions related to neoliberalism and good governance within the structure of the nation-state therefore demonstrate the dominance of the West in development and within the world order more generally. Core concepts associated with European modernity are spread with the justification that they are universally applicable. These concepts include individualism and individual rights, liberal democracy, secularism and capitalist economy. These norms have been historically spread through European colonialism, and more recent processes of modernisation and they continue to be spread through the hegemonic development discourse. These Eurocentric conceptions of society have central legitimacy in the hegemonic world order, and as they correspond with the European Union's foreign and development policy goals, the EU can be safely placed within the hegemonic development discourse.

3.3 History of EU as a Development Actor in Africa

The European Union's involvement in development in Africa dates back to its predecessor, the European Economic Community (EEC) with the Yaoundé Conventions in 1963. The EEC would engage in more substantial cooperation through the Lomé Conventions, beginning in 1975 roughly until the formation of the EU with the Maastricht Treaty of 1992. The Lomé Conventions were central to the EU's development partnership with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP). Originally, the focus was economic partnership, but as the international development paradigm and the Union itself became more politicised, so too did the relations between the erstwhile EEC and the developing ACP countries.

Africa has long been considered to be within Europe's sphere of influence, especially as the postcolonial period has been characterised by the continued involvement of former colonisers such as Britain and especially France. During the Cold War, the United States considered

Africa to be a 'special European responsibility'.¹¹⁷ Despite the fact that powerful members of the then EEC had recently left the continent as colonisers mostly in the 1960s and 1970s, the EEC considered itself to be exceptional: “The European Community is young, it has no past.”¹¹⁸ Though the statement itself is controversial, it goes far in demonstrating the self-perception of the EEC and now the EU, as a *sui generis* (unique) political formation, and one which offers itself an historical blank slate, despite the troubling past of colonialism. Suffice to say, that this perspective is interesting in from a postcolonial viewpoint.

Beginning with the first Lomé Convention in 1975 the EEC thus sought to focus on forming economic partnerships with the world's least developed regions, the ACP, as a means of boosting their development prospects largely through preferential trade, as well as development aid and investment. Towards the end of the 1970s, a more liberal understanding of development began to shape the EEC's approach.¹¹⁹ This change in economic policy coincided with the same neoliberal shift in global economic thinking that would see Deng Xiaoping open China's market to (restrained) capitalism, with this period also seeing Margaret Thatcher's dramatic scaling back of the welfare state in the United Kingdom.¹²⁰ The neoliberal turn emphasises free market capitalism as a means in itself to development, counter to the previous Keynesian, protectionist, or developmental state theories.

Towards the end of the Lomé Conventions, with the Cold War over, the (now) European Union (EU) began to push for more of an emphasis on “political dialogue and effective management of aid”.¹²¹ This was also due to a change in the global development discourse which began to see democracy and human rights as pre-conditions for development. These were previously viewed as “outcome[s] of a successful social and

117 Schraeder (1995) in Gorm Rye Olsen, “China and the European Union in Africa: The Triumph of Western Order?,” in *The panel on “The European Union”s Relations with Major International Powers* (presented at the Pan-European Conference on IR, Stockholm, 2010), 2.

118 Stephen R. Hurt, “Co-operation and coercion? The Cotonou Agreement between the European Union and ACP states and the end of the Lomé Convention,” *Third World Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (2003): 162.

119 Ibid.

120 Harvey, *Neoliberalism*.

121 Hurt, “Co-operation and coercion?,” 162.

economic modernisation process.”¹²² A new emphasis on political conditionalities and not simply economic relations is also related to the adoption of the Maastricht (Union) Treaty in 1992, as these conditionalities became a core policy instrument of EU development policy, now part of the Union's common legal basis.¹²³

The significant development involvement that was characterised by the Lomé Conventions would continue into the new millennium with the signing of the Cotonou Agreement with the ACP nations in 2000. The agreement explicitly attached political conditionalities to the EU's relations with the ACP. Good governance, as one of the EU's essential conditionalities, proved difficult to include in Cotonou due to resistance from the ACP side, though eventually it was included as a fundamental element of that agreement, with revoking of aid as a possible consequence for failing to meet good governance standards set out by the international community.¹²⁴ It is argued that in the post-Cold War world, along with declining EU economic and strategic interest in ACP countries, and Africa in particular: “the promotion of values and norms in the European-African relationship has become more important.”¹²⁵ The inclusion of political conditionalities is reflective importance of norms and values in EU development policy, and also validates Hettne and Söderbaum's notion that soft imperialism exists in Europe's relations with the ACP. That it to say that there is an uneven power balance, where the EU imposes its political norms on its ACP partners.

Though the Cotonou Agreement saw the official politicisation of the provision of aid, the agreement still had a fundamentally economic thrust. While Lomé had arranged for preferential trade agreements with developing countries, these arrangements were found to be in contravention of World Trade Organisation regulations. Thus, with Cotonou, the EU restructured trade relations by entering into negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements, with the intent to

122 Grimm (2003) qtd. in Christine Hackenesch, “China and the EU's Engagement in Africa: Setting the Stage for Cooperation, Competition or Conflict” (German Development Institute, 2009), 16.

123 Orbie and Versluys (2009) qtd. in Olsen, “China and the EU in Africa,” 15.

124 Hurt, “Co-operation and coercion?,” 172.

125 Hackenesch, “China and the EU's Engagement in Africa,” 2.

establish interregional Free Trade Agreements with the various regional constellations within the ACP. This shift is in keeping with the dominance of neoliberal economic ideas, and their fusion with development policy, in the post-Cold War era.¹²⁶

Despite low economic interest in sub-Saharan Africa (relative to China's increasing stake), the region remains important to the development of the EU as a global actor.¹²⁷ Economic and political relationships related to development are not the only areas of strategic importance for the EU in Africa. Also, in the development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Africa has also been important as a region where the EU's greater Foreign Policy role can be developed in practice.¹²⁸

3.4 EU Institutions and Policy

European Union institutions have been strengthened since the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 which integrated development policy into the Union's common legal basis.¹²⁹ Various of the EU's signed development agreements have been mentioned such as the former Lomé Conventions, succeeded by the Cotonou Agreement. The EU institution responsible for the aid and investment portion of these development agreements has been the European Development Fund(EDF).¹³⁰ EU cooperation goes beyond the aforementioned agreements, with the Mediterranean Economic Development Area (MEDA), the South Africa agreement, and a number of the EU's international commitments including the Doha development round of World Trade Organisation(WTO) negotiations, the Millennium Development Goals with the United Nations(UN) among other multilateral processes aimed at less developed countries.¹³¹

The European Union's uniqueness as a supranational actor has already

126 Hurt, "Co-operation and coercion?," 162.

127 Olsen, "China and the EU in Africa," 3.

128 Hackenesch, "China and the EU's Engagement in Africa," 15.

129 Olsen, "China and the EU in Africa," 15.

130 Ibid., 16.

131 Ian Taylor, "Governance and Relations between the European Union and Africa: the case of NEPAD," *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (2010): 59.

been mentioned, so it is no surprise then that development aid is a shared competency between community (EU) and Member States. On the European level, the Directorate-General for Development is in charge of aid policy, while on the national level this responsibility is variously held by either a ministry of development cooperation, or a section within the ministry of foreign affairs.¹³² Having development policies for both the EU and for the Member States presents a great challenge of coordination. The EU Commission has attempted to alleviate this problem through the signing of the European Consensus on Development¹³³, signed by the Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council and the Member States in 2005.¹³⁴ This is the first time that common principles of development policy have been established between the EU and its members.¹³⁵ The issue of fragmentation of EU development policy points to one of the reasons why Africa is important for European foreign relations – that it represents a sphere of influence where the EU aspires to put its desired policy coherence into practice.¹³⁶

In the theoretical section of this thesis (Chapter 2), the notion of the European Union as a normative power was introduced. Indeed, ethical and moral concerns are often said to be important elements of the European Union's global outlook.¹³⁷ Hyde-Price argues that the European self-perception as a 'force for good' in the world, is a 'discursive instrument' that provides ideological and political legitimacy for EU foreign relations.¹³⁸ It is certainly true that like other hegemonic powers in history, the EU attempts to export its model of economic and political integration as one for the world's regions to aspire to. This is evidenced through the heavy emphasis on regionalism in EU foreign relations. The emphasis on 'normative power' at least where development policy is concerned, can find its roots in the Maastricht Treaty which

132 Hackenesch, "China and the EU's Engagement in Africa," 3,15.

133 This replaced the Development Policy Strategy of 2000.

134 Ibid. "China and the EU's Engagement in Africa," 15.

135 Grimm, Bergh and Freres (2005) qtd. in Ibid. Ibid.

136 Ibid.

137 Manners (2002, 2008) and Hyde-Price (2008) qtd. in Olsen, "China and the EU in Africa," 9.

138 Andrew Hyde-Price, "A tragic actor? A realist perspective on 'ethical power Europe'," *International Affairs* 84, no. 1 (29-44): 29.

formed the EU. As explored above, the EEC had only really put an emphasis on economic relationships with the ACP. Within the Maastricht Treaty, otherwise known as the Union Treaty, the EU commits itself to explicitly promote principles of democracy, rule of law, and human rights.¹³⁹ It is important to consider the critical aspect of the EU's exportation of ethical and moral (or normative) ideas, as universally applicable. On this vein, Taylor suggests that the EU takes the European experience, and extrapolates it universally.¹⁴⁰ This is also reflective of the universalist beliefs of European culture, as well as the Eurocentric diffusionism and developmentalism discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The application of ideas developed in a European context, has quite problematically caused development-related problems when it comes to the adoption of neoliberal economic policies, or the inapplicability of European perspectives on good governance.

The EU's political and economic development model forms the basis of what they export to developing countries, based on “economic liberalisation and the rules of the free market, democratic norms and practices, and human rights protection.”¹⁴¹ While human rights protection forms an important conditionality within European international discourse, the issues of neoliberal economic liberalisation and democratic good governance form core economic and political elements of EU development policy. The issue of poverty eradication, the stated goal of EU development policy since the year 2000, is also an important aspect of EU policy in Africa.

The Maastricht Treaty also states that 'the promotion and gradual integration of developing countries into the world economy' as an aim of the EU.¹⁴² This is consistent with the trade emphasis of the Lomé Conventions as well as the Cotonou Agreement. From certain perspectives this goal may also be consistent with the EU's development policy priority of poverty eradication, though this point is controversial.

139 Taylor, “The case of NEPAD,” 52.

140 Ibid.

141 Panebianco and Rossi (2004) qtd. in Ibid. Ibid.

142 Hurt, “Co-operation and coercion?,” 165-166.

Since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, poverty eradication has become a priority, though it is highly doubtful that by pursuing neoliberal, free-trade policies within the framework of the WTO, that this goal can be realised. Indeed, it is argued by certain commentators that neoliberal economic thinking and the goal of poverty eradication are completely incompatible, and indeed, contradictory. As Hurt asserts: “the methods outlined for achieving this objective are actually likely to hinder rather than assist in meeting these targets.”¹⁴³

The arguable inability for neoliberal economic policies to work for the poor is not the only (economic) inconsistency when it comes to EU development policy. It is also argued that the EU's image as a partner of developing countries is damaged, given the heavy subsidisation it gives its agricultural producers through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).¹⁴⁴ Indeed, as the EU's development policy relies increasingly on normative arguments, its vulnerability to accusations of hypocrisy are increased. In other words, as long as the EU argues to be pursuing development goals that are 'good for all', once self-interested aspects of the EU's development-related policies can be identified, the EU's legitimacy as a development partner may be cast into doubt.¹⁴⁵

The European Union pursues an explicit policy of linking its development policies with those of international financial institutions (IFIs) including the World Bank(WB), and International Monetary Fund(IMF). “The European Union, for its part, designs its objectives and principles of development policy closely in line with international agreements.”¹⁴⁶ This is also true of EU adherence to World Trade Organisation rules within its most recent agreement with the ACP countries, Cotonou. The preferential trade basis of the Lomé Conventions was abandoned in favour of free-trade, compatible with WTO rules. It is argued, however, that this represents a “coercive policy direction” because in applying WTO rules “they are portrayed as fixed

143 Ibid., 165.

144 Hyde-Price, “A tragic actor?” 32.

145 Ibid.

146 Hackenesch, “China and the EU's Engagement in Africa,” 2.

and immutable and not the political construct which they really are.”¹⁴⁷ Essentially this represents a system of discursive and political legitimacy on the international level (or regime of truth), where development policies are simply justified by their association with mainstream development institutions such as the IFIs, as opposed to having a real dialogue as to the negative implications of neoliberal economic policies, in this instance. Hurt argues that EU neoliberal economic policies in development have more to do with the self-interest of European political elites and “the outward oriented fraction of the capitalist class” than they do with development policies focussed on achieving legitimate economic development in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁴⁸

The European Union's attachment of political conditionalities, most prominently including good governance initiatives, is thus in keeping with its role as a 'normative' political actor. The idea of good governance can also be seen as important in EU external relations as it also relates to the kinds of economic and political conditionalities (*acquis communautaires*) required for new members to join the Union. Though good governance itself has not always been central to EEC/EU development policy, it has now gained a central role in the legitimacy of development aid. This is evidenced by a statement by the EU Director-General for Development: “Good governance is key to development. Without the rule of law, security or sound public finances aid will never succeed in giving people a long-term future.”¹⁴⁹ This kind of rhetoric is characteristic not only of EU development policy, but also of the broader international consensus on development policy as espoused in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Good governance represents a core political norm exported by the EU, as it promotes the development of political and institutional capacity to facilitate neoliberal economic policies, the rule of law, the protection of

¹⁴⁷ Hurt, “Co-operation and coercion?” 174.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ “ODA not sufficient to reach the MDGs”: Interview with Commissioner Pielbags,” *The Courier*, June 2010, 43.

human rights and democratic norms and practices.¹⁵⁰ In the European Consensus on Development, it is emphasised that 'sustainable development includes good governance, human rights, and political, economic, social and environmental aspects'.¹⁵¹ The EU's emphasis on good governance is highlighted with its overwhelming support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)¹⁵² as 'good governance' is conceptualised within this initiative as "a prerequisite for Africa's renewal."¹⁵³

Taylor criticises NEPAD in that the emphasis on good governance reflects "the dominance of technocratic neoliberal thinking" as well as "a refusal to acknowledge that European policies have not worked in Africa to promote development."¹⁵⁴ NEPAD represents an organisation that has adopted orthodox notions of good governance and democracy, with these "Western-derived ingredients for development" being unproblematically adopted.¹⁵⁵ The success of such an endeavour, is however, thrown into question when considering the fact that those who crafted NEPAD are many of Africa's 'Big Men' involved in 'neopatrimonialism', which itself forms part of a functioning system of governance in many sub-Saharan African countries.¹⁵⁶ This ultimately leads to two issues with the EU's good governance efforts in Africa: the extent to which these policies actually reflect reality, and also the extent to which good governance is simply a means to legitimising development assistance. Taylor makes astute observations as to the application of EU good governance policies in sub-Saharan Africa:

Because the EU's own conception of 'good governance' is technocratic and apolitical... the personalisation of political power—either at the low or high social levels—which stakes out well defined roles within most African polities, is barely understood by the EU's own officers,

150 Panebianco and Rossi (2004) qtd. in Taylor, "The case of NEPAD," 52.

151 Ibid., 52.

152 NEPAD was founded by the heads of state and government of the Organisation for African Unity (later the African Union) in 2001. NEPAD functions as the socio-economic development "technical body" of the AU. It was formed through the merger of two separate initiatives: the Millennium Africa Recovery Plan proposed by then South African President Thabo Mbeki, the Omega Plan proposed by Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade. "History," *NEPAD*, n.d., <http://www.nepad.org/history>.

153 Taylor, "The case of NEPAD," 58.

154 Ibid.

155 Ibid., 54.

156 Ibid., 56.

*even in the field.*¹⁵⁷

To the second point, highly politicised initiatives such as NEPAD and the Cotonou Agreement are loaded with political, democracy-affirming language, arguably for the purpose of legitimacy in the developing 'partners', and for 'domestic consumption' in the European Union.¹⁵⁸ Thus, regardless of the actual effectiveness of good governance initiatives, the use of good governance still has a purpose within the political discourse.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has placed the European Union's development policy within the broader framework of the hegemonic development discourse, with policy imperatives including neoliberalism and good governance within the frame of the nation-state. The EU's emphasis on normative power and on the spread norms related to liberal democracy and capitalism situate it within the universalist tendencies of European culture. That is to say that the EU seeks to propagate European norms and values through its development policy, often without regard for the applicability of those norms elsewhere.

With an emphasis on 'modern' ideas developed from the Renaissance, through the Enlightenment and resulting in the emergence of individual rights and equality during the French Revolution, European culture contains the self-perception of being at the height of development. This informs perspectives such as Eurocentric developmentalism and diffusionism, supposing that while Europe is modern and dynamic, other parts of the world are traditional and static, and in need of European cultural norms to advance. This thinking informs modernisation and ultimately forms a part of hegemonic development discourse, and therefore the European approach to development. The dissemination of neoliberalism and good governance presently represent the most predominant ideas on development conceived in the West, to be adopted

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 57.

¹⁵⁸ Hurt, "Co-operation and coercion?" 165.

by the world as a whole.

The EU, initially as the EEC, has a long history of development relations with sub-Saharan Africa dating back to 1963 and with the ACP countries more significantly, dating back to 1975 and the Lomé Conventions. While this relationship initially focussed on preferential trade, the EU demonstrated its partiality to global hegemonic institutions in pushing for free trade agreements when the Cotonou Agreement was signed in 2000. This is in keeping with the largely economic focus of the EU's development relations with sub-Saharan Africa, and also with the preeminence of neoliberal priorities in its development policy. While Cotonou also saw the formal introduction of political conditionalities into the EU-ACP agreement, the emphasis on good governance demonstrates a heavy focus on the political facilitation of neoliberal market reforms above all other political priorities, including human rights.

The focus of EU development policy in sub-Saharan Africa on technocratic projects such as good governance political reform, along with neoliberal economic reform, are a reflection of the internal priorities of the EU itself. The imposition of these ideas on countries of sub-Saharan Africa represents the imbalance of power between the two regions; it is indeed a form of soft imperialism.

Chapter Four: Chinese Political Culture and the PRC in Africa

4.1 Introduction

In order to understand China as an historical and contemporary political actor in Africa, context is required. Thus, this chapter will first discuss Chinese political culture and its impacts on foreign policy, decision-making and outlook before outlining China as a developmental actor in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the social constructivist spirit that ideas give meaning to interests, and ultimately form important socio-political structures, culture here gives us this vital context. As discussed in the theoretical section (Chapter 2), specifying Chinese culture and its impacts on foreign and development policies will help to overcome Eurocentric assumptions that would otherwise skew the analysis.

China differs from the hegemonic development actors in that it is not a liberal democracy. The differences, however, run deeper. It is a hierarchical society with strong interpersonal norms, governing social relations. Social order is viewed as sacred, and the highest attainable goal is 'harmony' in the social world. Other important priorities of Chinese culture include balance in the universe, and mutually acceptable agreements (which helps to maintain social equilibrium). These goals can all be achieved through the application of pragmatism. The above goals have a high level of impact on Chinese foreign policy. With the diminishment of ideology, and the increase of pragmatism, this has represented a return to more traditional cultural norms in Chinese governance and policy formation.

The goals of global peace and harmony, the maintenance of diversity and balance in the international system all find a place in China's foreign policy globally, and its development policy in Africa. The colonial pain of China's own past has informed its position and desire as an anti-hegemonic actor in the developing world. Indeed, China's policies of non-interference and mutual respect form part of a Third Worldist

developmental ideology.

The first involvement of the People's Republic of China in Sub-Saharan Africa was driven by the spread of Maoist communism, as well as Third World solidarity, especially with colonial independence movements. While the first quarter-century of Chinese involvement in Africa was defined by ideology, the second saw a shift towards pragmatism in China's foreign and development policies. An important aspect of Chinese foreign policy is also the aim for China to return to its self-perceived rightful status as a benevolent great power. African nations have been of strategic importance towards the PRC gaining a more central role in the global system, helping the PRC to enter the United Nations in 1971, and offering support in light of international condemnation of the Tienanmen Square incident of 1989. The latter sparked a resumption in relations that would gradually increase in economic importance. Africa remains important in China's goal to: "promote the establishment of a new just and rational international political and economic order."¹⁵⁹ It is within this broader international context that China's approach to development assistance evades Western paradigms. Ultimately, it will be shown that China's investment and financial policies are influenced much by a state-business (or state capitalistic) approach to aid, and an approach that heightens the importance of bilateral relations and local ownership for recipient countries. The absence of political conditionalities is only the beginning of differences between Chinese aid and traditional aid.

4.2 Chinese Political Culture

This section will outline particularities in Chinese culture that explain integral aspects of domestic politics, which are the basis of the construction of its development policy. This relies upon Lancaster's assertion that development policy is created on the basis of domestic

159 Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Zimbabwe (2003) qtd. in Ian Taylor, "The 'all-weather friend'? Sino-African interaction in the twenty-first century," in *Africa in International Politics: External involvement on the continent*, ed. Ian Taylor and Paul Williams (London: Routledge, 2004), 88.

politics.¹⁶⁰ The focus on culture is also important as it “shapes a nation's behaviours and its development pattern.”¹⁶¹ This is also in keeping with the constructivist assertion that ideas form the basis of political structures.

The soft use of power approach introduced in the theoretical chapter is reflective of a more Chinese approach to foreign policy. While a rationalised, strategic use of soft power is conceptualised from a European perspective, strong and resurgent Chinese cultural norms which dictate the soft use of power form the context within which China's foreign and development policies are constructed. Thus it is important to explore certain facets of Chinese culture that have such an impact. This section will discuss the importance of Confucianism in modern China as it has reemerged after the political culture moved away from communist ideology more towards pragmatism, based on traditional Chinese conceptions of order, hierarchy and relationships, all of which affect the construction of interests. Intertwined with this is a history of confrontation with Western colonialism, both discursively and physically, which underlies China's reemergence as a global power, and its combination of resilience and adaptation towards hegemonic Western ideas.

Li Mingjiang emphasises several keys to understanding soft power in the context of China, including how China's foreign policy and strategy are shaped by: “Chinese cultural traditions, political values, and domestic and international imperatives...”¹⁶² The intertwined aspect of culture and foreign policy, along with an understanding of important aspects of Chinese political history are essential factors in understanding China as a global actor. Indeed, with China's ascent as a global power, an attempt to maintain influence and to avoid the: “traditional power politics of hostile balancing or war” requires: “prudent use of power in deeds and words.”¹⁶³ While this is of great strategic importance, it also fits with the Chinese cultural worldview where balance and harmony within society

160 Lancaster, *Foreign Aid*.

161 Chen, “The Practice of the Mean,” 85.

162 Li, “Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature,” 10.

163 Deng, “The New Hard Realities,” 64.

and between nations is essential.

Chinese culture should be understood in terms of its durability, having survived challenges by Western colonial powers, and later from within, when Mao Tse Tung attempted to purge traditional values with the Cultural Revolution.¹⁶⁴ Coupled with the end of the communist planned economy, and the opening of the market by Deng Xiaoping, was the reemergence of Confucian thinking in mainstream Chinese politics. Deng's revision of the goal of China to realise 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' entailed a new respect for Chinese culture. Indeed, this also demonstrated the durability of Chinese culture as it had: "cracked the universalistic claims of scientific Marxism."¹⁶⁵ This is also an indication of the problems that the application of universalist ideas can have in specific cultural contexts.

The internal political orientation of China has changed much since 1949, initially emphasising communist ideology under Mao, Deng would shift focus to pragmatism, which itself relates to traditional Chinese norms that affect decision-making. The contestation that occurred during the shift between Maoism (ideology) and Dengism (pragmatism) demonstrates that: "Chinese politics are not about left vs. right, but about conflicts in institutional hierarchy."¹⁶⁶ This is an important point, especially with pragmatism now defining Chinese governance and foreign policy. The Chinese attempt to move beyond ideology in international relations relates directly to the domestic political trajectory. The move from ideology towards pragmatism is also more reflective of Chinese cultural values in governance. Pragmatism and lack of ideology provides for "reasoned policy evaluation" and "liberation from heavy handed doctrine" and more towards "clear-headed reasoning."¹⁶⁷

Chinese pragmatism benefits from cultural predispositions that make behaviour guided by the logic of existing circumstances totally acceptable, and allow for unsentimental abandonment of past commitments and outdated rational notions. The culture fuels pragmatic

164 Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre*, ix.

165 Ibid.

166 Ibid., 39,71.

167 Ibid., 75.

*motives by emphasising here and now.*¹⁶⁸

The routine announcement and acceptance of 'reforms' and adjustments' "may seem to the non-Chinese mind to be substantial changes."¹⁶⁹ In reality, the Chinese political culture is very different, both for cultural reasons, and also for structural reasons. As far as the latter is concerned, the centralised control of the Communist Party gives the ability for flexible policy, while the social hierarchy tends more towards acceptance of changes in government policy towards sustaining the goals of the society as a whole. This is one aspect demonstrating how: "China's traditions offer little support for democracy."¹⁷⁰ This is difficult from a Western perspective where the legitimacy of democracy is total, much as the absence of ideology in the political system would be almost unthinkable from a Western perspective.

The collectivist nature of Chinese society, inclusive of mutual responsibility, can be seen in the concept of 'face', or the maintenance of one's personal honour, determined vis-à-vis one's comportment to the other. Indeed, the other defines the self more in Chinese culture than, for instance, in Western culture.¹⁷¹ Part of the importance of the other is the importance that Confucius put on paired relationships, stating that they "provide the dimensions of the most important realities in human affairs."¹⁷² The importance of maintaining these social relations cannot be understated. In Chinese tradition the social world is the most essential element of existence, and within that world the pursuit of order and harmony is: "the highest ideal that can be hoped for and the most sacred quest that human beings can conduct."¹⁷³ Harmony is supported by the concept of the Golden Mean, which stresses balance, respect for difference and achieving mutually acceptable agreements as important in achieving harmony.¹⁷⁴ An essential part of Chinese philosophical tradition and statecraft, the Golden Mean highlights the importance of

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 106.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Robert E. Gamer, ed., *Understanding Contemporary China* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008), 7.

¹⁷¹ Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre*, 71.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Chan Hoiman and Ambrose Y. C. King, "Religion," in *Understanding Contemporary China*, ed. Robert E. Gamer (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008), 367.

¹⁷⁴ Chen, "The Practice of the Mean," 84-90.

balanced relationships in the universe.¹⁷⁵ Included in this equation is the Yin (feminine or negative principle) and Yang (masculine or positive principle) emphasising the realities that must be balanced: “black and white, right and left, good and bad, them and us.”¹⁷⁶ Thus the universal qualities of Confucian thought are demonstrated, though this represents more of a: “soft (aesthetic) universalism in contrast to a hard (rational) universalism in the West.”¹⁷⁷ This kind of universalism stresses the importance of relationships, harmony, and balance as the highest goal in any social situation.

Guanxi, meaning 'relationship', is a key aspect to the Confucian conception on social order. The fundamental element of *guanxi* is ascribed relationships which one has an obligation to honour. These are comprised in Confucius' 'five orders': emperors and ministers; father and son; husband and wife; one brother and another; and among kin and friends.¹⁷⁸ These strict societal requirements: “help ensure that one's family and the country's leaders will command supreme loyalty”¹⁷⁹ Another element of *guanxi* which is essential to understanding Chinese society, are achieved relationships. These have to do with strategic interest, though it must be stressed that this interest is by no means short-term. These relationships are long-term, involving confidence-building as mutual trust is at their foundation.

With increasing business opportunities of more open capitalist society, the combination of the Confucian ethic of achieved *guanxi* is demonstrative of the strength, and indeed reemergence, of traditional norms in contemporary Chinese society.

*Today, as China strengthens its ties with international capitalism and capitalist nations, weakens its actual and ideological ties to international communism, and experiences rapid social change, traditions of both Confucianism and popular culture help fill its spiritual void.*¹⁸⁰

This is an interesting process, and must be viewed with respect to

175 Ibid., 84-85.

176 Ibid., 86.

177 Ibid.

178 Hoiman and King, “Religion,” 367.

179 Ibid.

180 Gamer, *Understanding Contemporary China*, 6.

context, as the European experience of the concomitant growth of capitalism and secularism is not entirely applicable, due to the continued strength of traditional ideas and social relations in China. Indeed, even within ascribed relationships “sharing capital, labour markets and special connexions” demonstrates the durability and compatibility of Chinese social structures in gaining from capitalist market opportunities.¹⁸¹ This leads to the crucial point concerning Chinese culture and the growing capitalist market: “China can contribute to global capitalism without being absorbed by it.”¹⁸² It would be a mistake to say that Chinese society has not been weakened by the “assaults of modern culture” but China's “disciplined social core” remains strong despite the challenges posed by modernisation and the capitalist economy.¹⁸³

Guanxi is an important concept for several reasons. It demonstrates the strength of mutual accountability in Chinese society as well as the adaptability of the social system to capitalist structures¹⁸⁴. It is also important because it demonstrates that the Chinese conception of interest is not constrained to short-term, self-interest based mostly on profit maximisation (as a Western, rational choice approach would assume). *Guanxi* emphasises the interpersonal relationship on a human level, seeking long-term and trust-based relationships as opposed to simply seeking out the highest possible profit. This approach gives insights into the importance of confidence-building as well as the long-term outlook of Chinese development and foreign policy ventures.

The reemergence of China as a global power comes after the end of a long period of self-perceived inferiority in Chinese history. The period between the First Opium War (ending in 1842) and the end of World War Two is termed as China's 'century of humiliation'.¹⁸⁵ Political incursion, economic exploitation and military aggression humiliated the

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 7.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 6.

¹⁸⁴ This is revealing of a paradox: at once there is both the flexibility of the Chinese social structure in adapting to capitalism, while the structures used for this purpose are themselves rigid, and hierarchical.

¹⁸⁵ David Scott, *China Stands Up: the PRC and the International System* (Oxford: Routledge, 2007), 11.

Chinese nation, creating a popular mentality of victimisation.¹⁸⁶ This is a strong reason for China's policy of anti-hegemony, as the negative experience with European colonial powers further delegitimises encroachment on the sovereignty of other nations.

While the period of China's colonisation ended with the repatriation of Hong Kong and Macau in the late 1990s, the feeling of historical humiliation still shapes Chinese security and identity.¹⁸⁷ Since the founding of the People's Republic, Chinese communist leaders “were still overburdened by history which placed so many chips on their shoulders regarding relations with the region and with the world, especially the West” in which “the psychological complexities stemming from this historical burden have made the Chinese very defensive and reactive to even the smallest thing that impact their national interest.”¹⁸⁸ Added to this historical burden are present issues of the US-supported Republic of China (Taiwan), which is claimed by the PRC, and American involvement in the East Asian region more generally, making historical anxieties regarding hegemony more present.¹⁸⁹

An outcome of China's history of colonial invasion, by European powers and later by Japan, anti-foreignism has long been present in Chinese society.¹⁹⁰ This is evident not only the idea of physical domination by Western realpolitik, but also in Chinese resistance to concepts relating to progress and human freedom, developed in the West and introduced to China as early as the 18th Century.¹⁹¹ Indeed, Deng was faced with the dilemma of the reemergence of Chinese culture and also the institution of modernisation, largely influenced by conceptions of the economy that were developed in the West. This leads to the “serious contradiction which China faces... while it is opening itself to the outside world, it is also trying to resist and eliminate Western ideas.”¹⁹² Deng warned against 'spiritual pollution' which included: humanism and the

186 Chen Jian (2001) qtd. in Ibid., 13.

187 Callahan (2006) qtd. in Ibid., 11.

188 Wandani (2005) qtd. in Ibid., 12.

189 Kuang-Sheng Lao, *Antiforeignism and Modernization in China* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1990), 262.

190 Ibid.

191 Gamer, *Understanding Contemporary China*, 6.

192 Lao, *Antiforeignism and Modernization*, 247.

theory of human nature; bourgeois liberal ideas of humanity and love; a negation of class differences; a propagation of religious beliefs; and advocacy of bourgeois ideas of liberty, democracy and individualism.¹⁹³ Many of these ideas are central to the hegemonic world order, as discussed above. Demonstrating the conflict between modernisation and opposition of Western ideas, the advocacy against 'spiritual pollution' was restrained due to a fear that this kind of rhetoric might oppose modernisation.¹⁹⁴

4.3 Cultural Approaches to Foreign Policy

Chinese approaches to foreign policy are both informed by the Chinese historical experience, as well as cultural norms which inform Chinese social structures and processes of decision-making. Part of China's overall foreign policy aim is to gain a position of relative equality with the world's major powers, overcoming historical humiliation.¹⁹⁵ Along with this historical element, the cultural aspect of China's approach to foreign policy includes an emphasis on harmony and moving beyond ideology in international relations, based on Chinese pragmatism.

The emphasis on strong relationships, maintained by honour, and promoting harmony detailed above as parts of Chinese culture, also form important parts of Chinese foreign policy. Within Confucianism, for instance, there is the insistence: “on treating other nations with kindness and morality and believe that tenderness is the antidote to roughness”¹⁹⁶ Similarly, from a Chinese perspective within the historical Sinocentric international order¹⁹⁷, big states were meant to build trust with small states by “taking less and giving more.”¹⁹⁸ This was a way of reinforcing stability in the order. The revival of this kind of thinking is evident in Deng's statement: “Do not try to gain benefit for one party

¹⁹³ Ibid., 269.

¹⁹⁴ Deng Xiaoping, 12th National Congress of the Chinese Communism Party qtd in Ibid. Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Zhao, “Prospect of China's Soft Power,” 255.

¹⁹⁶ Chen, “The Practice of the Mean,” 87.

¹⁹⁷ The Sinocentric international order was the historical order in East Asia, centred upon China, prior to European incursion in the 19th Century.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. “The Practice of the Mean,” 87.

only. It should be mutual to both nations and their peoples.”¹⁹⁹ Indeed, since the Chinese leadership's reconciliation with Chinese culture under Deng Xiaoping, the Golden Mean has seen a resurgence in China's foreign policy, providing a framework for moving beyond the military and ideological confrontation that sometimes characterises the international order.²⁰⁰ This kind of flexibility in foreign policy is also representative of Chinese pragmatism. An example of this is China's record at the UN Security Council, where a pragmatic approach, especially mindful of China's international image, guides China's voting behaviour.²⁰¹

*It is no accident that many Chinese analysts now talk about the Chinese cultural emphasis on 'harmony' or 'peace' as the sources of China's soft power because these values essentially touch on how power should be used.*²⁰²

It is in this cultural context that China seeks to promote a “world of harmony” as key to its foreign policy. This includes respect and tolerance for “different ideologies and social systems”, and “consultation among all countries, not unilateralism driven by hegemonic ambitions.”²⁰³ The first basis of this approach is strongly linked to Confucius, who stated: “men of honour live in harmony with differences, men without honour live in conflict without differences.”²⁰⁴ These kind of arguments, also stated by Hu Jintao: “seeking peaceful coexistence among nations and maintaining global diversity” are not only in keeping with Chinese traditions but are also attractive from postcolonialist or Third Worldist perspectives²⁰⁵ This is also in keeping with the mutual respect that was, at the least, an ideal of the Sinocentric world system.²⁰⁶ Promoting multilateralism can also be seen as a means for confidence-building, something that is compatible with the kind of long-term trust that is crucial to Chinese strategic relationships (achieved *guanxi*). Indeed,

199 Ibid., 90.

200 Ibid., 89-90.

201 Kay Möller and Nicolas Becquelin, “La Chine et le nouvel ordre mondial,” *Perspectives chinoises*, no. 58 (2000): 4-11.

202 Li, “Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature,” 8.

203 Zhao, “Prospect of China's Soft Power,” 250.

204 Chen, “The Practice of the Mean,” 98.

205 Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era: New Leaders, New Challenges* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 191.

206 Chien-peng Chung, *Domestic Politics, International Bargaining and China's Territorial Disputes* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 172.

Beijing is attempting to push for a new international environment, especially in East Asia, through: “confidence-building measures, settling border disputes, practicing relative restraint, reassuring neighbours of benign [intentions] and actively participating in regional economic, political and security dialogues and institutions.”²⁰⁷

China's emphasis on a peaceful rise and global harmony are not only functions of their political culture, they are also reflective of China's perception of global politics, and the mistakes made by presently hegemonic powers. As stated by a contemporary Chinese General: “China will not go down the old road of some major Western countries, which embarked on an expansionist path after their rise to power”²⁰⁸ This recognition of the mistakes of former major powers explains China's willingness to move beyond military and ideological confrontation, using pragmatic approaches to achieve Chinese development within the context of a harmonious, stable globe.²⁰⁹ This is the ideal; whether it is achievable is another question entirely.

Governance in the Chinese context, both historical and contemporary, is informed by a degree of decentralisation that allows for general programmes to be constructed and implemented according to regional requirements. “One of the long-standing strategies of Chinese states in late imperial as well as contemporary times has been to expect local governments to interpret general directives in ways that reflect local conditions.”²¹⁰ This is reflective of a distinct mode of governance, which also emphasises firstly, innovation through implementation, and subsequently, the drafting of universal laws and regulations.²¹¹ This is representative of a cultural affinity towards pragmatism and is in stark contrast to European policies which usually must first adhere to laws and regulations prior to implementation. Such a mode of governance adds an interesting perspective to China's development model, as such

207 Li (2007) qtd. in Li, “Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature,” 9-10.

208 General Cao Gengchuan qtd. in Wo-Lap Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era*, 167.

209 This is certainly intriguing as ideology was central to the conflict between the two major powers of the 20th Century, the United States and the Soviet Union. China's attempt to move beyond ideology represents something perhaps unique in modern international relations.

210 Wong, “Significance of Place,” 539.

211 Shaoguang Wang, “The Case of China” (presented at the New Dynamics of Governance in the 21st Century, Vienna, October 16, 2010).

adaptability may be of interest to developing countries seeking for more innovation in development strategies.

This kind of innovation, along with the kind of pragmatism outlined above, as well as self-determination and social cohesion, form core components of China's development model.²¹² China's alternative development paradigm has been coined by Ramo as the 'Beijing Consensus' which is an adaptation of the Washington Consensus, discussed in a previous section on development hegemony.²¹³ The 'Beijing Consensus' not only emphasises China's 'no-strings attached' approach (or lack of political conditionalities attached to development assistance), but more importantly it is based on the Chinese development model, where "a liberal market economy exists under an authoritarian political system."²¹⁴ The reformed Chinese market economy was based on selective application of neoliberal model with special emphasis on entrepreneurship, the market, international trade, and globalisation.²¹⁵ China's market is still heavily influenced by the state-owned sector, accounting for 31% of the production of the GDP, compared with 61% by the private sector.²¹⁶ Despite the interest in the Chinese development model that will be demonstrated in the analysis: "China has intentionally avoided actively promoting its model."²¹⁷ This section has shown how China's foreign policy and governance are informed by a culture focused on harmony, social order and pragmatism.

4.4 China in Africa

The People's Republic of China emerged during the Cold War as a third force whose Maoist revolutionary doctrine differed from the geopolitical aspirations of the preeminent communist regime, the USSR. The latter,

212 Ramo (2007) qtd. in Zhao, "Prospect of China's Soft Power," 258.

213 Joshua Cooper Ramo, "The Beijing Consensus" (The Foreign Policy Centre, Spring 2004), <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/244.pdf>.

214 Li, "Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature," 2-3.

215 Zhao, "Prospect of China's Soft Power," 257.

216 Wang, "The Case of China."

217 Zhongying Pang, "China's Soft Power Dilemma: the Beijing Consensus Revisited," in *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, ed. Mingjiang Li (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009), 131.

of course was involved in the geopolitical intrigues of the Cold War which saw much competition between the Soviet Union and the United States of America. It is within this context that China sought to differentiate its position from that of the hegemonic powers. That position of third world solidarity with Africa remains, what has changed significantly has been the thrust of China's foreign policy: once largely ideological, it is now pragmatic.

From a foreign policy standpoint, much of the People's Republic of China's international relations are motivated by the aspiration for China to return to its historically self-perceived role as a benevolent (and responsible) great power.²¹⁸ Indeed, this desire to gain a more central role in the global system is also argued to be part and parcel of why Africa has historically been of importance to China. It is no coincidence that China's increased involvement in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s was linked with a desire to secure support for replacement of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in the United Nations and ergo in the UN Security Council. Of course adding to this complex context was also the PRC's spread of revolutionary, anti-colonial, communist ideology as a counter to the Soviet Union.²¹⁹

While Chinese involvement in Africa waned during the 1980s, it was the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989 that pushed Africa, and indeed the developing world as a whole, to the forefront of Chinese foreign policy. The PRC's global reputation was severely damaged as many Western governments heavily criticised China's human rights record. This was in turn perceived as a gross violation of China's internal sovereignty, thus the reassertion of two important policies that continue to be central to Chinese foreign policy: “non-interference in state sovereignty and freedom from 'hegemony'...”²²⁰ China's reemergence with what Taylor terms as Africa's 'all-weather friends' was part of an effort by the PRC to gain allies in the developing world, and thus in the United Nations as

218 Evan S. Medeiros, *China's International Behavior: Activism, Opportunism, and Diversification*, Rand Project Air Force (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2009), 8-9.

219 Joshua Eisenman, “China's Political Outreach to Africa,” in *China into Africa: Trade, Aid, and Influence*, by Stanley Crossick and Etienne Reuter (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 230.

220 Taylor, “The ‘all-weather friend’?,” 87.

well. It is in this context that China gained much support in challenging a global regime that largely favours democracy and human rights. Perhaps viewing itself as an emerging leader of the developing world, Chinese foreign policy has sought officially to establish non-interference and mutual respect for the affairs of each sovereign nation as a fundamental basis for a new international order.²²¹ These are important points in Chinese foreign policy where Chinese political perspectives counter the Western perspectives that inform what is termed here as the 'hegemonic' development discourse.

Chinese involvement in Africa began in earnest in the 1956, following the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955, with an emphasis on Third World solidarity, and on spreading the revolutionary values of communism from a Chinese perspective.²²² While the major communist power at the time, the Soviet Union (USSR), was also heavily involved in Africa during the Cold War, China sought to promote its own Maoist political ideals. As the Sino-Soviet split became a more open reality, and especially as China's cultural revolution began, the People's Republic of China (PRC) became a competitor with the USSR in promoting what it viewed as a truer version of communism on the African continent. China's development assistance thus represented as much of a challenge to the West as it did to the Soviet Union.²²³

The PRC's political revolutionary focus on anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism fuelled its support of African liberation struggles beginning in the 1960s.²²⁴ This would help to cement China's status as an anti-hegemonic force in the developing world. Along with the ideological component of Chinese involvement, was a more pragmatic approach involving financial aid and technological assistance needed for

221 Ibid., 88.

222 Filip de Beule and Daniël Van den Bulcke, "China's opening up, from Shenzhen to Sudan," in *New Presence of China in Africa*, ed. Meine Pieter van Dijk (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press - EADI, 2009), 44.

223 Bräutigam, *Chinese aid and African development*, 8.

224 Chris Alden and Ana Cristina Alves, "China and Africa's Natural Resources: The Challenges and Implications for Development and Governance," *South African Institute of International Affairs*, no. 41, Occasional Paper Series (n.d.): 7; Taylor, "The 'all-weather friend'," 94.

modernisation in many newly independent African nations.²²⁵ This was especially strong during the PRC's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and was focussed on the provision of agricultural assistance, though there were also emphases on health and education.²²⁶ With this early Chinese development assistance, they sought to export methods that were integral in to their own national development experience, which was very much underway at that time.²²⁷ Even within this more pragmatic aspect of China's early involvement in Africa, both Chinese cultural and political ideas were transposed into the African context.

Bräutigam identifies two kinds of ideas that the Chinese brought with their (largely agricultural) development assistance in the 60s and 70s. Firstly, 'communist culture' was shared, focussing on “symbols and values of self-reliance and struggle” as well as sharing the 'thoughts of Mao' and certain beliefs about lifestyle and equity characteristic not only of communism, but also of the Chinese interpretation thereof.²²⁸ Secondly, the certain aspects of traditional Chinese culture were shared including work ethic, a leadership model based on awe and respect, and “values of authority, hierarchy, and Confucian paternalism.”²²⁹ While China's more recent drive for financial and technical assistance in Africa is less infused with the former, communist ideology, the latter traditional Chinese ideas are important, and even resurgent, as seen in the section above on Chinese culture.

Through China's development projects there were also other ideological components, especially derived from China's own development experience. While not always replicated, they did still have influence. These included a focus on 'serving the people'; preserving the dignity of labour and organising production on a group basis.²³⁰ Chinese development projects also sought to reaffirm the supremacy of the state, something crucial to their domestic and international objectives at

225 Alden and Alves, “China and Africa’s Natural Resources,” 7-8; Bräutigam, *Chinese aid and African development*, 3.

226 Bräutigam, *Chinese aid and African development*, 3.

227 Ibid., 7.

228 Ibid., 28.

229 Ibid.

230 Ibid.

assuring that state sovereignty is supreme, both in national and global contexts.²³¹

China's own national experience in development includes a political culture with a different perspective on governance and the rule of law, where the latter is seen as malleable as well as subservient to the former. It has often been noted in Chinese political and economic development, that often certain practices have been adopted before the legal framework has been set into place.²³² Indeed, this perspective differs starkly from the West, where the rule of law is supreme, and where democratic, consultative governance is emphasised. This kind of approach might prove attractive as it is more innovative from a development perspective.

China's domestic policies changed dramatically with the beginning of its socialist modernisation programme through market-oriented reforms introduced by Deng Xiaoping beginning in 1978. This, in turn, meant that Chinese aid policies themselves also become a more pragmatic approach, with more economic thinking coupled with the cultural tradition of pragmatism, as discussed above. Throughout the 1980s China focussed itself internally, seeking international financing for its own modernisation programme, which limited its role in Africa as African nations offered little opportunity of providing foreign direct investment for China itself. But China would reemerge as an important aid contributor in 1990s, sparked by the Tiananmen square incident of 1989.

Under heavy international pressure due to the crackdown on democratic reformists: "Chinese aid in the post-Tiananmen era increased dramatically as Beijing scrambled to win over allies and sympathetic associates."²³³ This incident only caused strengthening of China's policy of non-interference in internal affairs, and would provide a continued emphasis on South-South solidarity against the 'hegemony' of the West. The Tiananmen square incident sparked a massive increase in Chinese development aid to Africa, at the time promoted by political imperatives.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Wang, "The Case of China."

²³³ Taylor, "The 'all-weather friend?'," 87.

This increase in Chinese involvement in Africa can be characterised as a reemergence of China on the continent, and also forms the more contemporary foundation for China's massive increase in state-business involvement in Africa from 1998 to present.²³⁴

4.5 China and Third World Development Ideology

It was in the spirit of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism (or, anti-hegemony) that the People's Republic of China first became involved in Africa, particularly in the era of independence in the 1960s and 1970s. China's shared status as a country that had a sense of humiliation brought on by colonisation and exploitation, and also as a country which was itself attempting to develop, helped China gain legitimacy as a Third World partner for many Sub-Saharan African nations.²³⁵ Indeed, China's relations with Africa have seen it gain the status of a leader in the developing world. Part of this is a sense of solidarity with many Third World political elites against the international norm of intervention, perceived as an aspect of neocolonialism, or hegemony of the West.²³⁶

China's involvement in Africa from the outset has had as much to do with strategies in international relations as it has with China's self-perception, as well as its domestic political and economic efforts at modernisation and development. The People's Republic's strategy of gaining a more prominent role in global politics is a major part of its foreign relations with African nations. China has sought to confirm its status as a “benevolent great power.”²³⁷ The country's political class sees this as an historical return to the prominence of China globally. Ensuring international respect means that African votes are important at the UN, much as they were in approving the PRC's accession to the UN Security Council, replacing the Republic of China (Taiwan), in 1971.²³⁸ Much of Beijing's ideological narrative is rooted in national political priorities, of which non-interference is a crucial part. Maintaining

234 Martyn Davies, “How China delivers development assistance to Africa” (Center for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch, February 2008), 3.

235 Hany Besada, “The Implications of China's Ascendancy for Africa” (The Centre for International Governance Innovation, October 2008), 3.

236 Acharya and Buzan, “Why is there no non-Western IR theory?,” 18.

237 Medeiros, *China's International Behavior*, 8.

238 Ibid., 13.

sovereignty and territorial integrity are key components of both China's domestic and foreign policies.²³⁹ This is another indication of China's foreign policy being informed by its own domestic political issues.²⁴⁰ This follows with the assertion that development policy, as a component of foreign policy, is equally shaped by domestic politics.²⁴¹

Despite China's perceived role of leadership in the developing world, China's political leadership, since Deng, has emphasised maintaining a subtle role. This is part of Deng's 'guiding principles of twenty-four characters', which stated: "[w]atch the world with a calm mind; stand firmly; confidently deal with the difficulties; keep a low profile; never act as a leader and do things well."²⁴² Part of China's reluctance to have an outright leadership role in the developing world is also in keeping with their anti-hegemonic foreign policy. Deng also emphasised the pragmatic aspect of avoiding the leadership role: "Those practicing hegemony have a bad reputation, so acting as the head of the Third World will also be ill-reputed. This is not a word of courtesy, rather, a realistic political consideration."²⁴³ Indeed, Chinese foreign policy has much to do with pragmatism and the ability to make decisions without obstacles such as ideology, and in this case, it could be argued that a more prominent developing world leadership role could also potentially constrain China's room for pragmatic decision-making.

The growing influence of China in Africa represents much more than an increase in potential geo-political competition between East and West, though this is indeed an important aspect.²⁴⁴ Especially through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC),²⁴⁵ China has stated its aim at creating a new order globally, especially among developing nations. With an emphasis on peace and harmony, prosperity and development, a major component of China's political discourse in Africa

239 Ibid.

240 Davies, "How China delivers development assistance to Africa," 5.

241 Lancaster, *Foreign Aid*.

242 Chen, "The Practice of the Mean," 91.

243 Ibid., 92.

244 Pádraig Carmody and Francis Owusu, "Competing Hegemons? Chinese versus American Geo-Economic Strategies in Africa" (presented at the Irish Aid, Development Education Conference, Dublin City University, 2006), 1.

245 For more on FOCAC see also pages 79-80.

focuses on: “the emergence of a just and equitable new political and economic order by fostering unity among developing countries.”²⁴⁶ This points to a need for the developing world to re-imagine a world where the West's hegemony is no longer ultimate, and perhaps, where liberal democracy is no longer the only form of legitimate governance.

The PRC directly addresses its strong opposition to key aspects of the present hegemonic global order within FOCAC's Beijing Declaration.²⁴⁷ They push for the right of countries to adopt their own political models, human rights included:

*countries, that vary from one another in social system, stages of development, historical and cultural background and values, have the right to choose their own approaches and models in promoting and protecting human rights in their own countries.*²⁴⁸

In the same declaration, political conditionalities based on human rights themselves “constitute a violation of human rights” and human rights and good governance-based conditionalities should “themselves be vigorously opposed.”²⁴⁹ These are direct challenges to the hegemonic order in development and they have proven popular with much of the African political leadership. China's policy of characterising the world as multi-polar, in which China is a benevolent power, is becoming a truism in Africa where its push for a new kind of global order is gaining traction.²⁵⁰ Also notable is the linkage between this perspective and the Confucian principle regarding maintaining diversity.

The attempt at forging a new global order does not only cover the political dimension. The Chinese economic option in Africa may very well mean an opportunity for African nations to escape the grips of neocolonialism in the form of economic dependency on the West. China may represent an opportunity for reworking the colonial trade structure in Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁵¹ It is also interesting to note that favoured

246 Alden and Alves, “China and Africa's Natural Resources,” 8.

247 The Beijing Declaration was concluding statement by Chinese and African leaders upon completion of the first China-Africa Summit in Beijing in 2000.

248 “Beijing Declaration of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, October 12, 2000), FOCAC Archives, <http://www.focac.org/eng/lttda/dyjbzjhy/DOC12009/t606796.htm>.

249 Ibid.

250 This will be explored in the sixth chapter.

251 Carmody and Owusu, “Competing Hegemons?,” 2.

market access for the Chinese is justified on the basis of South-South solidarity, and counter-hegemony.²⁵² China's emphasis on each nation's right to choose its own approaches and models does not only apply to the political realm; it also applies to the ways in which they do business, the way the economy is structured, and ultimately how they develop economically.²⁵³ On the economic level, this can be seen as a challenge to the neoliberal economic reforms and conditionalities imposed upon African countries over the last quarter century, as discussed in the EU and development hegemony chapter.

China's prominent influence in Africa today, with preferred market access for resources as well as for Chinese corporations still has much to do with the foundation of political legitimacy that China established on the continent during the 1960s and 1970s. China's "historical ties with many of the African liberation movements and political elite" represents a political factor that underlies the PRC's ability to create such strong economic relations with African bilateral partners. China is not only considered a rival option (as opposed to 'traditional donors' largely of the West) for creating economic development, it is also considered to be a country which has proven its anti-hegemonic credentials and thus can be engaged on the basis of South-South solidarity as well.²⁵⁴

4.6 Present Era of Chinese Investment and Development Assistance

The present era of Chinese investment in Africa has its foundation in China's revolutionary political ties established in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the reemergence of relations after the Tiananmen square incident of 1989. On the political level, Chinese engagement continues to emphasise the importance of South-South relations, and the strengthening of the principles of non-interference and mutual respect. These ideas now find themselves with new meaning, as they are now being applied to bilateral economic partnerships between the PRC and

252 Taylor, "The 'all-weather friend'?", 94.

253 Ibid., 90.

254 Alden and Alves, "China and Africa's Natural Resources," 7.

especially resource-rich African countries as China attempts to secure resource and energy security, as well as developing future markets for export.²⁵⁵ Underdeveloped countries are also included in China's Africa strategy, especially as China seeks to ensure that Taiwan not have diplomatic relations, supported by development assistance.

China's involvement in Africa is controversial, not only for its political implications but also due to the threat of uneven economic relationships equating some kind of new economic colonialism.²⁵⁶ China's anti-hegemonic political rhetoric attempts to counter these sentiments, in combination with the relative empowerment of African bilateral partners in commissioning most projects financed by the Chinese. What is certainly true is that Chinese development assistance and its approach is fundamentally different, which will now be discussed.

Chinese development assistance has come under much fire in the West for the absence of political conditionalities, as well as the support of African countries regardless of the legitimacy of their regime by Western political standards. There is a fear that without conditionalities, efforts by Western governments and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to improve governance, transparency and human rights, will be eroded.²⁵⁷ As discussed in the EU and development hegemony chapter (Chapter 3), the ability of such reforms to have results in the first place, can be questioned. Another issue arises when it comes to the Chinese development policy process, which itself lacks transparency. The structure of Chinese development assistance draws criticism because it evades agreed-upon international (read Western-developed) standards, and because it is little understood.

Part of the difficulty in the discourse about Chinese aid, is due to ambiguity on the Chinese side as to what actually constitutes aid in the first place. As Alden and Alves point out, Beijing has a broad definition

255 Medeiros, *China's International Behavior*, 8.

256 Barry Sautman and Han Hairong, "Trade, Investment, Power and the China-in-Africa Discourse," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* (n.d.): 1, <http://japanfocus.org/-Barry-Sautman/3278>.

257 Alden and Alves, "China and Africa's Natural Resources," 18.

as to what aid actually is.²⁵⁸ “The current inconsistencies in China's definition of aid give rise to the lack of clarity on its framework and policy making process.”²⁵⁹ One of the ways in which China broadens the definition of aid is that many of its development projects are done through state-business partnerships, so-called 'coalition engagements'.²⁶⁰ This direct state-business approach to foreign policy is certainly something new in international relations which gives a whole new meaning to the idea of 'state capitalism'.²⁶¹ The favoured market access for Chinese corporations that comes with this approach certainly raises alarm bells in the West, as their traditionally dominant business interests are quickly facing uneven competition in many resource-rich African countries. Traditional Western business hegemony is being challenged in Africa, in major part because of China's 'coalition engagements'.²⁶² Again, this overt, and relatively unique approach demonstrates “iconoclastic willingness to change old patterns”, whether it be domestically, or internationally.²⁶³ This is another impact of pragmatism on Chinese foreign and development policies.

There are several aspects of China's approach that differ from traditional aid practice. One of these aspects has much to do with national ownership and mutual respect: the initial step to aid projects involving Chinese financing (grants, interest-free or concessional loans) is the submission of a proposed project by the prospective recipient government. This assures that the project fits with the developmental goals of the African government in question, and is also symbolically important in that it reaffirms their national sovereignty, as well as the spirit of South-South cooperation. “This is viewed in Chinese policy making circles as preferable, given the continent's history with cash disbursements by traditional donors.”²⁶⁴ Usually concessional loans are provided, subsidised by the Chinese government, with the terms of the loan (purpose, amount, maturity and interest rate) agreed upon through a

258 Davies, “How China delivers development assistance to Africa,” 1-2.

259 Ibid., 2.

260 Ibid., vii.

261 Ibid.

262 Chris Alden and Martyn Davies, “A Profile of the Operations of Chinese Multinationals in Africa,” *South African Journal of International Affairs* 13, no. 1 (Summer/Autumn 2006): 83.

263 Bräutigam, *Chinese aid and African development*, 28.

264 Davies, “How China delivers development assistance to Africa,” 8.

bilateral, intergovernmental framework.²⁶⁵ The loans are provided by one of China's policy banks: the Agricultural Development Bank of China, the China Development Bank or Export-Import Bank of China (EXIM).²⁶⁶ EXIM Bank funds most Chinese loans to African nations. Chinese loans are agreed upon on a bilateral basis, but a way in which they also differ from traditional development aid, is that the transfer of money is 'virtual' rather than 'real'. Funds in reality are transferred directly to the contractor set to carry out the project. These contractors are always Chinese companies, as no less than 50% of the project must be carried out by Chinese companies.²⁶⁷ This approach to dispersing funds directly to contractors, bypassing the national government, leaves very little chance for corruption.²⁶⁸

*The rationale is premised on the notion that if an African country is in need of aid, and can identify the project that it requires the aid to pursue – then it is simpler for the aid giver to simply deliver on the project rather than just transfer the funds. This prevents the possibility of corruption in country eating away at the funds.*²⁶⁹

Not only does this pragmatic approach neutralise the potential for corruption on the national level, it also effectively neutralises Western criticism on the level of governance, at least inasmuch as corruption is concerned .

The approach to loans explained above forms a part of the 'Angola Mode', which generally refers to the exchange of loans, generally for infrastructure, in return for Chinese access to energy and natural resources.²⁷⁰ This, of course, involves no political conditionalities. More precisely, in return for infrastructure Chinese natural resource companies are given: “the right to mine natural resources through acquisition of equity stakes in a national oil company or through acquiring licenses for production.”²⁷¹ The emphasis on the provision of infrastructure is another indication of China's pragmatism due to the fact that traditional donors have long abandoned infrastructure as part of their development

265 Alden and Alves, “China and Africa’s Natural Resources,” 9.

266 Davies, “How China delivers development assistance to Africa,” 20.

267 Ibid., 19.

268 Ibid., 1,9.

269 Ibid., 12.

270 Alden and Alves, “China and Africa’s Natural Resources,” 1.

271 Helmut Reisen, *Is China Actually Helping Improve Debt Sustainability in Africa?*, G-24 Policy Briefs (Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs and Development, n.d.), 2, <http://g24.org/pbn9.html>.

strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁷²

A major issue for traditional donors is both with the different approach that the Chinese take to aid, void of political conditionalities, coupled with a relative lack of transparency in deals made with African governments, and in the aid policy-making process more generally. This lack of transparency can be explained, at least in part, due to the plethora of government departments and agencies involved in China's foreign aid process.

China's foreign aid process begins with allocation of funds from the national budget, decided by the State Council. The Ministry of Finance is then responsible for drawing up the budget for foreign aid itself. The Ministry of Commerce is the lead agency in the distribution of aid, through the Department of Aid to Foreign Countries which coordinates foreign aid and foreign aid policy. Also involved in this process are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), responsible for China's Africa Policy as well as Forum on Africa-China Cooperation announcements of aid projects, along with the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Education who are also responsible for more specific aid projects.²⁷³

Added to this plethora of stakeholders are the Chinese contracts carrying out many projects, as well as China's EXIM bank which finances most projects. It is documented that even within the Chinese policy-making process around aid there are major communication problems.²⁷⁴ This, combined with China's historical policy of isolation, causes concerns over secrecy, with many in the West questioning China's motives as there is not a great deal of information on Chinese aid policy available. This has led to what Taylor describes as a fallacy of a highly coordinated resource diplomacy strategy, as is propagated in the Western media.²⁷⁵ In an effort to increase transparency, the Chinese government released a report entitled *China's Foreign Aid* in April, 2011.²⁷⁶

272 Davies, "How China delivers development assistance to Africa," 52.

273 Ibid., 12.

274 Bräutigam, *Chinese aid and African development*, 4-5.

275 Ian Taylor, "Chinese Engagement with Africa" (presented at the 3rd European Conference on African Studies Panel 116: "Beijing-Cosensus" versus "Post-Washington Consensus"? China's Impact on Africa's socio-economic spaces, Leipzig, June 4, 2009).

276 See *China's Foreign Aid* (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council The People's

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is itself the centrepiece of China's relationship with the continent. Established in 2000 with its first ministerial conference, the forum has had four ministerial conferences since its inception. The Forum represents a place where Chinese and African governments announce major projects. There is also a major political element to these conferences such as joint declarations and action plans. It is through Forum declarations, such as the Beijing Declaration mentioned above, that the aim of “overhauling the global order” is stated, and where “China's traditional hostility to what it sees as 'hegemony'” is advanced.²⁷⁷ Both Chinese Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Commerce participate in this forum, politically confirming the importance of economics within China's Africa Policy.

An interesting aspect of Chinese aid to Africa is that it almost always occurs on a bilateral level. This is in keeping with China's political perspectives on the supremacy of nation states in international relations.²⁷⁸ Though FOCAC provides a multilateral forum for cooperation and dialogue; other than the China-Africa Fund for Development (CAFD), aid negotiations, strategies and disbursements are done on a bilateral level. This emphasis on bilateral relations has also to do with the importance of African state control over loan concessions; this also provides for immediate assurance that China is delivering what respective governments want.²⁷⁹ Regionalists have been particularly critical of China's bilateral approach, arguing that it ignores important regional integration efforts in Africa, especially those promoted by NEPAD²⁸⁰

What underlies China's bilateral approach are the emphasis of the supremacy of the state, the assurance that the needs of the African state in question are being addressed (in as much as they also fit with Chinese interests), as well as other strategic issues such as the assurance that

Republic of China, April 2011), <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zxbd/wz/201104/t896900.htm>.

277 Taylor, “The ‘all-weather friend’?” 89.

278 Bräutigam, *Chinese aid and African development*, 28.

279 Alden and Alves, “China and Africa's Natural Resources,” 16.

280 Ibid.

Taiwan remains unrecognised by most (and for the PRC, ideally none) of the global community. These tendencies are more or less evident when simply analysing China's foreign policy from a distance. It could also be argued that cultural elements are also important reasons for China's bilateral approach, including the emphasis on paired relations within Confucianism, as well as the kind of bilateral confidence-building that is part of achieved relationships (*guanxi*).

The extent to which political ideology is still present in Chinese aid is an interesting topic given China's revolutionary history in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s. Of course, an external emphasis on communist culture has been largely absent from China's political discourse for decades, especially since the commencement of the 'socialist modernisation' project with the introduction of market reforms under Deng Xiaoping in 1978. The extent of Chinese ideological involvement is perhaps limited to a Third World development ideology that justifies China's tacit legitimacy as a leader in the developing world. Despite China's reluctance to assume a role of leadership, it is at least a figure of challenge and change to the hegemonic development discourse, and thus to the hegemonic world order. China's Third World development ideology is linked to domestic priorities of sovereignty, and territorial integrity, as well as mutual respect. The policy that any country, regardless of political or economic system, has the right to develop, is certainly a policy that gains more traction in developing countries than the political conditionalities of the EU and the West more generally. It is clear that the emphasis on bilateralism also affects China's state-business relations as aid projects are almost always done on a bilateral basis, and even within Chinese projects the supremacy of the nation state is emphasised.²⁸¹ Though there are no domestic political conditionalities when it comes to Chinese aid, there is of course the issue of the Republic of China (Taiwan). Affirmation of the One China Principle (non-recognition of Taiwan) represents the only clear political

281 Bräutigam, *Chinese aid and African development*, 28.

requirement in foreign relations between African nations and China.²⁸²

China's push for a new order based on cultural relativism, non-interference and mutual respect among developing nations represents a strong challenge to the present hegemonic development regime. With this in mind, there is a question as to whether China is repoliticising aid.²⁸³ Since the end of the Soviet Union, development in Africa has largely been the concern of liberal democratic actors, whose universalist ideals have sought the spread of the free market and liberal democracy, through political conditionalities. Along with an emphasis on the rights of each country to choose its own (politico-economic) models, China also places great importance on economic rights as well as rights of subsistence as opposed to the liberal democratic emphasis on civil and political rights.

Prior to the 1980s it was more broadly accepted that democratic institutions, rule of law and human rights come at a later stage of development.²⁸⁴ This idea was turned on its head in the West, and therefore in the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, then advocating that through politico-economic (good governance) reform initiatives must be adopted in order for developing nations to receive aid. However, the People's Republic, engaged in a development process of its own, sticks to the former definition, where capacity must be built in order to provide greater assurances along the lines of political and civil rights. That is to say, that economic and social rights, especially the right to develop economically, and thus the right to economically viable lives for its citizens, comes before the strengthening of individual freedoms and the opening of political discourse, among other things. These ideological elements demonstrate that China's political influence still very much runs counter to the imperatives of the

282 Dennis Tull, "China's engagement in Africa: scope, significance and consequences," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 44, no. 3 (2006): 463.

283 Davies, "How China delivers development assistance to Africa," 52.

284 This follows Lipset's thesis that economic development was a prerequisite for democracy. Seymour Lipset, *Political man : the social bases of politics*, Expanded ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981). See also Pei's discussion of development as certainly strengthening democracy, while democracy does not necessarily support development. Pei Minxin, "Political Institutions, Democracy and Development," in *Democracy, market economics, and development : an Asian perspective*, ed. Farrukh Iqbal and Jong-Il You (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2001), 25-31.

West.

While China's involvement in Africa is causing alarm in the West, there is a potential on the political side for African countries to gain stronger footing in the global system. China's failure to participate in the mainstream development culture has spurred a “new wave of Afro-realism” where African political elites believe they can gain new negotiating power with the EU and United States, given the Chinese option.²⁸⁵ There is also the belief that as African nations develop into a stronger economic bloc, through Chinese assistance, these nations can gain a greater voice globally.²⁸⁶ This is at least where the political discourse lies for China in Africa. Whether or not resource-rich African countries are over-exposing themselves on the economic side to Chinese resource exploitation is another question entirely. Another vital question is the real impact Chinese involvement has on the political discourse in Africa itself, something that will be addressed in the next chapter on the EU and China in Africa from African perspectives, where there is also the potential of modelling African economic and political efforts after those of the Chinese.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter started by discussing Chinese culture and its Confucian influences. A strong social hierarchy governed by interpersonal norms form the societal basis for attempting to achieve harmony, the highest goal in the social world. Achieving harmony, especially through the Golden Mean with its emphasis on balance in the universe, mutually acceptable agreements requires a certain degree of pragmatism. Paired relationships were discussed as the most basic components of the Chinese social hierarchy, where the concept of ascribed *guanxi* emphasises the maintenance of order, through social responsibilities that must be fulfilled. Achieved *guanxi* is also important as it demonstrates the long-term, trust-based nature of strategic relationships in the Chinese

285 Alden and Alves, “China and Africa’s Natural Resources,” 9.

286 Taylor, “The ‘all-weather friend?,” 93.

context. That is to say that rational choice theory does not adequately capture this dynamic.

The goals of Chinese culture are translatable to its foreign policy, with the soft use of power laid out by cultural concepts such as the Golden Mean and the pursuit of harmony. The Chinese cultural worldview views balance and harmony as something essential between nations as well as within society. An emphasis on diversity, in respecting and tolerating different ideologies and social systems, as well as goals of peace, harmony, prosperity and development, are all part of China's vision for a new global order that is compatible with its culture.

The evolution from an ideological foreign policy in Africa from the 1950s to 1970s, to a more pragmatic policy from the late 1970s onwards, was in parallel to a similar change in China itself. This highlights the importance of domestic politics when looking at how external policy is constructed.

Historical context is also important in terms of understanding China as a global actor, where its drive to become a benevolent global power is catalysed by the humiliation caused by colonialism and exploitation in the 19th and 20th centuries. This is also important context when viewing China's anti-hegemonic policies of non-interference and mutual respect, which have much to do with historical and contemporary experiences with Western hegemony. Indeed, these policies reflect China's domestic strategic interests as much as they also garner support among other Third World nations who are also against the norm of intervention, viewed as an implement of neocolonialism.

After initial developmental involvement in Africa from the late 1950s to the early 1970s, China's development assistance stagnated until 1989. Then, the Tiananmen Square incident forced China, then under fire by the West for its human rights record, to seek allies. China would turn back to Africa, whose support had also assisted the PRC in gaining ascension to the United Nations in 1971. This resumption of relations between China and Sub-Saharan Africa provides the background for the present involvement of the PRC in the region.

China's development assistance has been criticised by the West for its 'no

strings attached' nature, though this approach has arguably proven popular with African recipients. China's approach has sought to be more equitable, as a means of countering the traditional donors' relationships with African nations that involved dictates more than genuine dialogue. Chinese development policy reaffirms the supremacy of the state through the bilateral negotiation of agreements, and also in that the policies of non-interference and mutual respect prevent any formal discussion of national political structures in recipient countries.²⁸⁷ Indeed, this policy is also connected to the emphasis on diversity and China's own reluctance to openly promote its own development model, despite increasing interest in sub-Saharan Africa to replicate that model. China is also perceived as a rival option and counter-balance to the West, offering African nations new negotiating leverage with the EU and the US. While the Western media often fixates itself on the threat of Chinese 'economic colonisation', that would be an oversimplification of a relationship that is based on political and economic interdependence and solidarity.

²⁸⁷ Bräutigam, *Chinese aid and African development*, 28.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

China's involvement in sub-Saharan Africa does not happen in a vacuum. This thesis has discussed the Western, and therefore European hegemony over development. This chapter compares, and contrasts important aspects that inform the development policies of both actors in question, the European Union and the People's Republic of China. Ultimately, China's discourse regarding development indeed diverges with that of Europe. The convergence of both actors' development policies is unlikely due to sharply different domestic political contexts, from which development policy directly emerges. China's challenge will remain, though factors such as Chinese pragmatism, and EU-China interdependency will assure a certain level of dialogue.

The first section will discuss how the priorities of each actor are reflective of particular worldviews that are creations of culture and history. The social constructivist approach of the thesis will be reviewed, emphasising the importance of domestic ideas in creating development policy as well as international structures. Cultural outlook is important as the approaches of Europe and China can be characterised as universalist and particularist, respectively. These fundamental differences will also be discussed with respect to actor-specific constructions of interests and approaches to soft power. Finally, this section will examine how domestic politics affect development policy, including approaches to governance, and the reflection of internal political changes and domestic strategic priorities in development policy.

The second section will provide an overview of the European approach to development. The placement of the European Union within the hegemonic global order and the hegemonic development discourse will be discussed. This puts the EU in the prevailing global systemic culture which, following Cox's definition of hegemony, forms a regime that

defines legitimate domestic norms and practices.²⁸⁸ This includes the spread of liberal democratic political norms and neoliberal economic norms within a context of soft imperialism in sub-Saharan Africa. The respective perspectives of Eurocentric 'developmentalism' and 'diffusionism' underlie Europe's cultural worldview and legitimise the spread of these norms. EU-China interdependency will then be discussed, in the context of civilian power, also addressing the failure to date of the institutionalisation of EU-China-Africa trilateral cooperation. The third section is devoted to China's development discourse. China's cultural outlook and its effect on foreign policy are discussed. This includes the shift from communist ideology to pragmatism in domestic and foreign policy, within a varied context of resistance to and adaptation of, Western ideas. China's aid approach is then analysed, with the PRC's explicit focus on bilateralism, supremacy of the state, and advocacy for the right for nations to possess distinct political and economic systems. China's alternative order will be reviewed with the query as to whether or not it represents a discursive shift in development. It will be argued that it is representative of a competing systemic culture, where European cultural universalism contrasts significantly with Chinese cultural particularism. This trend is strengthened by the cultural, historical and strategic bases of China's non-interference and mutual respect approaches and other policies. It will be argued that China's development approach, the Beijing Consensus included, does in fact stand to weaken the European Union's soft imperialist position in sub-Saharan Africa. Nonetheless, Chinese pragmatism, cultural ideals regarding harmony, and a willingness to be perceived as a benevolent great power, will constrain Western fears regarding the negative impacts of Chinese involvement in sub-Saharan Africa.

The concluding section will outline African prospects in light of European and Chinese involvement in development on the continent. Significantly, from the perspective of political elites, more policy space is created as a result of this involvement, while there is also an opportunity

288 Cox, "Gramsci, Hegemony, and IR."

to change the colonial trade structure.²⁸⁹ Lessened European and Western hegemony may however have negative consequences politically, as many in African civil society fear. However, from an economic perspective, the example China has set for pragmatic, state capitalist development surely will create some optimism for alternatives to neoliberal capitalism in the development of African economies moving forward.

5.2 Theoretical Approach

The thesis began by laying out a social constructivist approach to the European Union and People's Republic of China's respective development discourses in sub-Saharan Africa. Establishing ideas as fundamental to political structures, strategy and interests provides a foundation for understanding the complexity and difference between two very distinct actors in development. A key part of this distinction is culture, something very often ignored by international relations analysis. With the emphasis that development policy is reflective of domestic political priorities, culture also has an important impact on perceptions and approaches of both actors. For example, Europe's universalist culture tends towards the spread of political norms while China's culture is more particularist and with emphasis on respect for diversity, the explicit spread of Chinese political norms is low in comparison.

The theoretical approach proves important linkages between culture and development policy and demonstrates how a non-Eurocentric approach is essential in analysing the emergence of non-Western actors in development in particular, and international relations more generally. That is to say that non-Western approaches need to be incorporated into international relations analysis, thus the incorporation of cultural aspects in the analysis is an attempt to move beyond Western assumptions including methodological individualism and the assumption of rational

289 Carlos Oya, "Greater Africa-China Economic Cooperation: Will This Widen 'Policy Space'?" *Development Viewpoint* 4 (2008): 1.

choice as the basis of all decision-making.²⁹⁰

The Eurocentric bias of international relations theory in particular, and of social science more generally presents a difficulty for balanced analysis of, in this instance, a European and non-European actor. The use of a social constructivist approach emphasising the differing makeup of political actors based on interests, and the negotiation of differing systemic cultures in the global order points towards moving beyond analysis that assumes a static system, where all states behave according to a uniform set of interests. Particular concepts of soft power applicable to each actor (soft imperialism, civilian power, and Normative Power Europe for the EU and soft use of power for China) demonstrate the importance of contextual, specific theories in explaining the approaches of Western and non-Western actors. Along with an international system created in Europe/the West, Eurocentrism exists in social science. One should however be mindful of Wallerstein's assertion that the myth of the "value-neutral observer" is at the core of the strength of Eurocentrism, as an approach incorporating culture challenges this.²⁹¹

5.3 The Role of Interests

The China-in-Africa discourse is prevalent in the West, particularly in countries heavily linked with Africa.²⁹² The core allegation of this discourse is that in its pursuit of fossil fuels and natural resources, China is in the process of colonising Africa.²⁹³ This is a rather ironic claim, given Western colonial and neocolonial (domination) of Africa – to understand the improbability of this claim, the Chinese approach must be understood from a Chinese perspective.

In this context, the construction of interests comes into play. Do culturally specific notions of interests not have any bearing on these judgements? As stated above, culture is not a simple material factor; it is

290 Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 335; Wong, "Significance of Place," 545.

291 Wallerstein, "Eurocentrism and its Avatars," 14.

292 Sautman and Hairong, "China-in-Africa Discourse," 1.

293 Ibid.

also the way people do business.²⁹⁴ The effect of cultural ideas on foreign and development policy and interaction is important. From a European perspective, rational choice is assumed to be the basis of decision-making with emphasis towards short-term gain. China, on the other hand demonstrably has more long-term economic interests in Africa.²⁹⁵ Chinese long-term interest also relates to the emphasis of trust and maintenance of relationships through confidence-building, along with mindfulness towards the maintenance of face, balance and social order.

Interests are of great importance in international relations as they give meaning to what motivates states as global actors. The trouble with interests in mainstream international relations theory is that they are often reduced to rational choice theory, again revealing of Eurocentrism in the discipline. However, a social constructivist approach allows for moving beyond this basic notion supported by Eurocentric biases on human nature by suggesting that interests are based on contextual ideas, and not simple material interests. Indeed, if as Wendt emphasises, material interests are composed of ideas in the first place, then surely the approach to securing those material interests can also be informed by diverse ideas.²⁹⁶ While from a cultural perspective European actors may behave more closely to rational choice, especially due to a cultural emphasis on individualism, in a Chinese context interests and decision-making are more impacted by collectivism. The Self is situated closer to the Other in Chinese culture, thus interests cannot be reduced to the level of the individual.²⁹⁷ Thus, the context of decision-making and interests is different.

This means that it is simplistic to assume that Chinese economic interest in Africa equates short-term interest due to the inter-linkage of short-term, rational choice theory and economics. This is important because a basic assumption of the China-in-Africa discourse's theory that China is colonising Africa is based on the notion that China's construction of interests is the same as those of former Western colonial powers. While

294 Li, "Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature," 3.

295 Alden and Alves, "China and Africa's Natural Resources."

296 Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 96.

297 Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre*, 71.

this requires further study, the contention is that complexity of Chinese interests in Africa prevent China from behaving as a colonising power either formally or informally. That said, the risk for African states of economic dependency on China is a different issue.

Another indication as to the importance of cultural specificity in the Chinese context is the notion of citizenship, which generally has less to do with self-interest and more to do with membership in the nation as a whole.²⁹⁸ Methodologically individualistic notions would fail to capture these elements about the construction of interest, thus further justifying the importance of taking a cultural approach when looking at China as a non-Western global actor in a global order reflective of Western hegemony.

5.4 Culture, Domestic Politics, and Policy Connection

The importance of culture in this analysis cannot be understated, especially as cultural norms and structures affect development policy. This applies more broadly to international relations theory. As the international system moves towards multipolarity, the rise of non-Western actors means the increasing importance of theoretical approaches that can adequately capture greater diversity of influence.

As a crucial characteristic of domestic politics, culture: “shapes a nation's behaviours and its development pattern.”²⁹⁹ These ideas form the basis of political structures. As emphasised by Lancaster, domestic politics is crucial to development policy.³⁰⁰ This thesis has outlined how domestic political transformations have a major impact on development policy. This includes China's move from communist ideology to pragmatism and the European Union's trajectory from a focus on economic and preferential trade to emphasis on free trade and a more of a politicised approach to development. The striking difference, is that China's change in policy is not from one ideology to another, but beyond, ideology itself,

298 Wong, “Significance of Place,” 539.

299 Chen, “The Practice of the Mean,” 85.

300 Lancaster, *Foreign Aid*.

at least in principle.

The Chinese approach to governance places emphasis on adaptability in relation to local contexts in the implementation of projects. This kind of flexibility is reflective of pragmatism, as well as a long history of decentralisation in the local implementation of centrally sanctioned programmes.³⁰¹ This emphasis on implementation before regulation is one that allows for innovation in development projects. Though this approach may impact the individual rights of citizens, the focus on communitarianism somehow justifies this.

In contrast, on the side of the EU, governance is constrained by the rule of law, ensuring that the rights of individuals are safeguarded. EU governance is model-based, reflecting universalism in European culture. Within the EU this can be seen in the *acquis communautaires*, which are general political and economic requirements for potential members to join the Union.

The political cultural contexts within both the People's Republic of China and the European Union are indicative that domestic approaches to governance also reflect external approaches to development. In China's case, there is not an emphasis on exporting China's own development model, as was emphasised when Deng Xiaoping told then Ghana President Jerry John Rawlings:

*“[p]lease don't copy our model. If there is any experience on our part, it is to formulate policies in light of one's own national conditions.”*³⁰²

This is in contrast to the European Union's approach to development which includes adherence to standardised political conditionalities through universal reforms. These reforms are advocated through good governance initiatives, emphasising the adoption of neoliberal economics and liberal democratic politics the world over.

The importance of domestic politics is also evident in internal changes being reflected in development policy. In the case of the EU, relations with ACP countries under the Lomé Conventions were chiefly economic, just as the erstwhile EEC largely focussed on economic issues.

301 Wong, “Significance of Place,” 539.

302 Pang, “China's Soft Power Dilemma,” 134.

As the EU was formed with the Maastricht Treaty, the now Union moved more towards political integration, which itself was reflected in more politicised relations with the ACP countries under the Cotonou Agreement.

As for the People's Republic of China, its initial involvement in Africa was representative of the same Maoist revolutionary ideology that was behind the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution in the PRC. With the chairmanship of Deng Xiaoping and a move towards incorporating a market economy, ideology would decrease in Beijing's development policy as much as it was decreasing domestically in importance. The ideological to pragmatic trajectory of China's development approach in sub-Saharan Africa was highly influenced by domestic political changes.

The impact of Chinese culture on its development policy is an affirmation of the importance of contextual ideas as the basis of politics. The assertion that domestic politics is important in creating development policy can be taken further to emphasise the impact of culture on a nation's development pattern.³⁰³ China's current status as a developing country means that development represents an issue of the Chinese present. Thus, its present experience with pragmatic development policy affects its external policy.

In the case of the European Union, domestic politics of the present are also exported emphasising the neoliberal turn in Western political economy. The combined Western approach to development (the hegemonic development discourse) is not representative of historical development patterns. This is in keeping with Ha-Joon Chang's assertion that the West, in falsely portraying their economic history as one supported by free trade, are “kicking away the ladder”, making it impossible for others to follow their real path of development which included protectionism and government intervention in the economy *as the rule rather than exception*.³⁰⁴ Indeed, the hegemonic development discourse is constructed by an inaccurate self-perception of the West. It

303 Deng, “The New Hard Realities,” 134.

304 Ha-Joon Chang, *Kicking away the ladder: development strategy in historical perspective* (London: Anthem Press, 2003).

is inaccurate within the false history of Western development and also in the idea that the present circumstances of the West are *directly* applicable to developing nations, particularly those of sub-Saharan Africa.

5.5 Differing Conceptions of Soft Power, Differing Contexts

The use of different conceptions of soft power is revealing of the importance of acknowledging the different contexts in which China and the EU develop their respective development policies. These dissimilar soft power approaches are influenced by cultural priorities including norms and respective historical positions. The European Union's use of soft imperialism in the sub-Saharan African context reflects a universalist culture, where the imperative is to spread European norms because they are premised to be applicable everywhere. On the other hand, China's soft use of power approach is reflective of Chinese cultural values surrounding social relations, largely based on Confucian thought.

The spread of norms is an important aspect of European soft power as the EU's political ideals are self-perceived as one of their greatest assets. These notions of soft power correspond with the European cultural disposition towards universalism. European norms have added legitimacy, particularly as they are in keeping with the prevailing liberal democratic ideals of the hegemonic global order. The EU's hegemonic position is reflected in the concept of soft imperialism, representative of the imposition of norms within the context of uneven relative power relations, a characteristic that has become essential to the hegemonic development discourse. These norms, or conditionalities are both economic and political. The asymmetry of power required for soft imperialism to be present, very much exists in relations between the EU and sub-Saharan African nations, all of which were at some point colonised by a European nation. In some way this asymmetry of power is a continuation of the historical, colonial dynamic. Civilian power exists in relations of greater symmetry, which is exemplified by EU-China relations, which focus on trade facilitation with political dialogue

secondary, and on equal terms.³⁰⁵ This is the case, despite the fact that China's political system is contrary to the liberal democratic principles of Europe, and of the global order as a whole.

The Chinese 'soft use of power' approach is a more appropriate construct for the analysis of China as a global actor, because this paradigm is influenced by cultural institutions compatible with soft power.³⁰⁶ Confucian ideals such as the Golden Mean, ensuring balanced relationships that push towards achieving harmony, ensure that China's approach with international partners is soft, or prudent, in nature.³⁰⁷ It should also be emphasised that the Chinese notion of *guanxi*, previously discussed, stresses confidence-building, towards maintaining long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. These cultural aspects demonstrate the importance of placing the conceptualisation of soft power within the context of the actor in question. Culture and soft power are intertwined for China.

Another important aspect of soft power is on the level of attractiveness, including domestic culture, and institutions. Nye argues that China's soft power will not increase because it does not possess an attractive (open, liberal democratic) political system.³⁰⁸ South African President Jacob Zuma has openly pondered to the contrary, wondering whether economic development can be achieved through similar "political discipline" to that of China:

*The developing world was told that if it did not Westernise and change its political systems to mirror those of the West, they could forget about achieving economic growth and development. Now we are asking what we could learn from other political systems and cultures? Is the political discipline in China a recipe for economic success for example?*³⁰⁹

The essential feature of China's attractiveness for developing countries therefore may not be the openness of their political system, so much as that system has demonstrated its success in economic development. The

305 Hettne and Söderbaum, "Civilian power or soft imperialism?" 545.

306 Chen, "The Practice of the Mean," 83.

307 Li, "Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature," 7.

308 Joseph S. Nye, "The Rise of China's Soft Power," *Wall Street Journal Asia* (Hong Kong, December 29, 2005).

309 Jacob Zuma, "South Africa, Africa and China in a Changing World Economy" (Lecture, Renmin University, Beijing, China, August 25, 2010), <http://www.info.gov.za/speech/DynamicAction?pageid=461&sid=12431&tid=15913>.

attractiveness of China's rapid economic development is perhaps increased when considering it has been accomplished without the politico-economic restructuring advocated by the West.

The EU undoubtedly wields soft power for the attractiveness of regionalism and democratic political structures along with an affluent level of development. Nevertheless, the European Union's soft imperialism in sub-Saharan Africa surely must work against this appeal. Perhaps what is missing in Nye's assumption on the attractiveness of the Western political system, is the negative historical impact of the imposition of Western political structures during the colonial and postcolonial periods.

China's soft power would seem to have more appeal to elites, as it provides legitimisation for political stability and economic development without the requirement of democracy. For African civil society, however, the democratic ideal holds greater sway as, for civil society to hold influence, democracy is almost certainly required. What is certainly true of the increasing involvement of China in sub-Saharan Africa, is that the European Union's soft imperialist position is being increasingly compromised.

5.6 EU Placement within Hegemonic Global Order

The most important aspect of European development policy is that it is firmly placed within the hegemonic global political order. The liberal democratic and neoliberal priorities of that order, or systemic culture are essential features of the hegemonic development discourse. EU policy being consistent with that of the hegemonic global order is revealing of dynamics that do not allow for simple comparison. Eurocentrism is not only found in international relations theory but also in practice due to the European origins and continued Western dominance of the international system. As proponents of non-Western IR theory suggest, international relations are not synonymous with inter-European

international life.³¹⁰

As emphasised in this thesis, liberal democracy, the rule of law and good governance form core components of EU political conditionalities, along with neoliberal economic principles form core components of the EU's discourse on development. These are also norms of the hegemonic global order, *the preeminent global systemic culture*, and they form part of Cox's criteria for 'world hegemony' including: "universal norms, institutions and mechanisms which lay down general rules of behaviour for states and for those forces of civil society that act across national boundaries..."³¹¹ In the context of development, the institutions defining "general rules of behaviour" would include the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (with membership of all 'traditional' donors) as well as the IMF and World Bank. These institutions reiterate the legitimacy of neoliberal economic norms, and the attachment of liberal democratic norms to the nation-state. That is to say that from a global order perspective, these norms are required for legitimacy. China poses a challenge to this order, because it defies the premise that legitimate nation states must be democratic in several ways. The People's Republic of China itself is an authoritarian state, while its foreign policy also advocates for the right of each nation to choose its own social and political systems. However, it should be noted that this does not entail a direct promotion of authoritarian political structures either.

The emphasis put on the spread of norms, especially through the hegemonic development discourse, is reflective of Foucault's concept, the society of normalisation, where mechanisms of power promote the propagation of norms.³¹² The concept of 'regimes of truth' is also important here as this powerful normative discourse legitimates itself.³¹³ The legitimisation of EU development policy through association with international institutions is exemplified in EU policy in the Cotonou Agreement, where the institution of free-trade Economic Partnership Agreements is justified by their compliance with World Trade

310 Acharya and Buzan, "Why is there no non-Western IR theory?"

311 Cox, "Gramsci, Hegemony, and IR," 172.

312 Foucault, "Power/Knowledge," 1103.

313 Foucault, "Power/Knowledge."

Organisation regulations, and not because of an informed debate about the merit of these policies from a development perspective.

The hegemonic development discourse contains within it essential features which Western political culture seeks to spread. Justification for spreading Western political norms lies in the assumption that they are universal, which is central to a Eurocentric worldview which privileges the Western model of development, and seeks to export it. Two such conceptions are Eurocentric developmentalism, the belief that Europe, as the most developed region, has an obligation to develop the rest of the world and Eurocentric diffusionism, the idea that Europe progresses and modernises while non-Europe regresses and is traditional and backward.³¹⁴ Europe's self-perception as modern and developed relies on such concepts as progress, productivity, and secularism.³¹⁵ These are part of modernisation thinking which assumes a linear path from underdeveloped to developed based on European conceptions of modernity, universal norms, social equality, democracy, (political and civil) human rights and capitalism.³¹⁶ As discussed, the development discourse can be viewed as the most important advocacy for Western political norms. Of any theme in Africa, debates on the state are the most pontifical and teleological of all.³¹⁷ The norms forwarded by the hegemonic development discourse are consistent with important norms of the hegemonic global order, thus as China challenges the mainstream approach to development, it also represents in some way a challenge to the broader order.

As has been explored here, the hegemonic development discourse has an emphasis on good governance towards the aim of establishing state capacity for neoliberal market reform. Neoliberalism puts emphasis on individual entrepreneurial freedom through establishing a free market and free trade, while diminishing the direct role of the government in the economy through privatisation.³¹⁸ This formed the core of the

314 Dussell, "Eurocentrism and Modernity."

315 Shanin, "The Idea of Progress," 65.

316 Amin, *L'eurocentrisme*, 51; Shanin, "The Idea of Progress," 65.

317 Thandika Mkandawire, "Thinking about developmental states in Africa," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 25 (2001): 289-314.

318 Harvey, *Neoliberalism*.

'Washington Consensus' and its focus on market-led development, as opposed to state-led development.³¹⁹ As identified earlier, the shift to neoliberal economic policy can be seen in the shift from preferential trade under the Lomé Convention to free trade under the Cotonou Agreement. The emphasis on neoliberal economic policy in development is also representative of a contradiction with the stated goal of poverty eradication, as the former arguably exacerbates the latter.³²⁰ Another contradiction that undermines the legitimacy of EU development policy is the continuation of massive agricultural subsidies, through the Common Agricultural Policy, which negatively impacts African agricultural producers.³²¹

As EU aid became more politicised in the 1990s, good governance reforms emerged, aimed towards improving “efficiency, authority and accountability” of recipient countries.³²² While these are framed as democratic political reforms, the goals of good governance including establishing the rule of law and tackling corruption are in fact more in the interest of market reform. The promotion of these norms is thus in keeping with the policies of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, representing the interests of the 'traditional donors'. The EU's support for good governance extends to the New Partnership for Africa's Development, an African Union driven organisation criticised for modelling itself on Washington Consensus ideas, with European support reflecting ignorance that European policies have been ineffective in promoting development in Africa.³²³ Support for NEPAD and for good governance represents what Taylor calls the “dominance of technocratic neoliberal thinking”³²⁴ Good governance also serves the discursive purpose of legitimising European development policy for the domestic audience, as it is associated with democracy and accountability.³²⁵

319 Gore, “Rise and Fall of the Washington Consensus.”

320 Hurt, “Co-operation and coercion?,” 165-166.

321 Hyde-Price, “A tragic actor?,” 32.

322 Leftwich (1993) qtd. in Demmers, Fernández Jilberto, and Hogenboom, “Good Governance and democracy in a world of neoliberal regimes,” 2.

323 Taylor, “The case of NEPAD,” 58.

324 Ibid.

325 Hurt, “Co-operation and coercion?,” 165.

The EU's status is controversial in Africa, as it perceives itself as having “no past” despite several facts.³²⁶ Firstly, the EU consists of all former African colonial powers. Secondly, the EU continues to push for political changes from what is arguably a neocolonial position of relative power. Despite the fact that the EU frames itself as a 'force for good' through the spread of core norms, Hyde-Price's assertion that this is a “discursive instrument” for the legitimacy of EU development policy is an important point.³²⁷ Indeed, the EU's policies do not stress the core political norms including democracy and human rights as much as they focus on neoliberal economic reform.

While the Western paradigm claims the moral high ground due to its association with democratic governance, it must be noted that the form of liberal democracy, along with neoliberal economy, promoted in sub-Saharan Africa is very different from popular democracy. Especially neoliberal reforms can exacerbate poverty, causing further marginalisation.³²⁸ Indeed, despite the EU's claims at the universality of its norms, one can note “widespread questioning of universalism and of the whole modernist paradigm with its assumptions about the convergence of societies on a single model.”³²⁹

5.7 EU-China Interdependency

The European Union's relationship with the People's Republic of China is characterised as one of civilian power. That is to say there is a relative power balance, thus the EU's promotion of norms and use of soft power in this instance is diminished. This, as has been previously emphasised, is very different to the EU's approach in Africa, where an uneven power balance in Europe's favour allows for a policy of soft imperialism, where norms are imposed rather than simply discussed.

³²⁶ Ibid., 162.

³²⁷ Hyde-Price, “A tragic actor?,” 29.

³²⁸ Hurt, “Co-operation and coercion?,” 165.

³²⁹ Michael Keating, “Culture and Social Science,” in *Approaches and methodologies in the social sciences*, ed. Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 102.

Though China's approach to development is impacting the EU's political priorities in Africa, the EU's ability to react is certainly constrained by EU-China interdependence. The EU's approach, thus cannot be one of dictates, even though without economic interdependence, it almost certainly would look that way. Instead, the EU must opt for a dialogue of equals, in keeping with the civilian power approach. Thus, there has been the establishment of the EU-China-Africa trilateral dialogue on development, discussed below.

The EU has thus committed to having dialogue with China regarding the coordination of development efforts. This has included bilateral dialogue through EU-China meetings, as well as the establishment of trilateral EU-China-Africa cooperation.³³⁰ There was an EU-China-Africa meeting in June 2007 attended by diplomats, academics and other stakeholders.³³¹ Ultimately, however, the attempt to institutionalise the EU-China-Africa dialogue has faltered, as the Chinese have backed out due to apparent African anger at the proposal of trilateral cooperation. This was revealed in a classified communiqué of the American Embassy in Beijing, which also quoted Julius Ole Sunkuli, Kenya's Ambassador to the PRC, saying that "Africa had nothing to gain from China cooperating with the international donor community" and concerned that: "China's practical, bilateral approach...would be changed by 'Western' interference."³³² There is also the issue of whether or not Africa is an equal partner within the EU's envisioned trilateral cooperation. It was also revealed that much African frustration had to do with not being consulted on the planned trilateral cooperation: "[African countries] argued that the third party in these nominally trilateral discussions was conspicuously absent. They perceived this as a Western attempt to rein in China's Africa assistance."³³³ African states are discussed as fearful of losing leverage if

330 Bernt Berger and Uwe Wissenbach, *EU-China-Africa trilateral development cooperation: Common challenges and new directions* (Bonn: German Development Institute, 2007), 6.

331 *Partners in Competition? The EU, Africa and China: A summary of a conference hosted by the EU Commission, Brussels, June 28th 2007* (Stellenbosch: Centre for Chinese Studies, Stellenbosch University, 28 2007).

332 "US embassy cables: African countries prefer Chinese aid to US-China cooperation," *The Guardian* (London, December 4, 2010), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/248299>.

333 South African Minister Plenipotentiary Dave Malcolmson qtd. in Ibid.

development partners cooperated.³³⁴ There is also the perception that China has indeed changed the behaviour of Western actors, with the EU in particular proposing infrastructure projects after having abandoned them.³³⁵

The prospect for outright China-EU development partnership seems slim, especially as each actor has a strong position: “[i]t is not possible for either the EU or China to define a partnership with the African continent while insisting on a monopoly of legitimacy for their own approach.”³³⁶ This forms the first part of three key challenges identified by Berger and Wissenbach for EU-China development cooperation in Africa: strategic partnership between the EU and China given contradictory approaches; African management of multiple partnerships; and Chinese consideration of the expectations of other actors.³³⁷ The expectations of other actors especially refers to those of the traditional donors. China has engaged with Western development actors in partnerships including the World Bank and the UK Department for International Development.³³⁸ A certain level of engagement is in keeping with the PRC's broader priorities of deeper integration into the global economy.³³⁹ Despite this engagement, China's willingness to alter their development discourse and adopt similar perspectives to the hegemonic development discourse seems improbable. Though China engages the global community more and more, for the growth of its economy, and for the assurance of stability, China's internal political culture, structures and issues prevent the adoption of the kind of universalist perspectives that characterise the hegemonic development discourse.

Attempts to universalise the European experience through the hegemonic development discourse is in stark contrast to China's policies of non-interference and mutual respect. With approaches strengthened

334 Ibid.

335 Ibid.

336 Berger and Wissenbach, *EU-China-Africa trilateral development cooperation*, 7.

337 Ibid., 8-9.

338 Martine Dahle Huse and Stephen L. Muyakwa, “China in Africa: lending, policy space and governance” (Norwegian Campaign for Debt Cancellation and Norwegian Council for Africa, 2008), 29-30.

339 Eunice Sahle, *World orders, development and transformation* (Houndmills Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 129-130.

by Chinese cultural traditions that emphasise respect for diversity, China also differs from Europe as they do not overtly seek to push their development model on others. This is not to say, however, that China's model of development does not increase the country's attractiveness as a partner to assist in the development of sub-Saharan Africa.

5.8 Chinese Cultural Outlook

The importance of understanding the cultural context of Chinese foreign policy has been stressed throughout the thesis. China's cultural worldview is very different from that of the EU, and cultural norms very much affect Chinese foreign policy as a whole and development policy in particular. Understanding the Chinese historical and cultural context is important when considering that the differences between China's conception of development and that of the EU, is just the latest in a centuries old history of resistance to Western universalist norms.³⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the combination of Chinese resilience and adaptation to the influence of Western ideas is revealing of China's adaptability and of the contradictions that can arise from a political system with an emphasis on pragmatism.

China has been faced with the dilemma of adapting certain Western ideas (especially related to the capitalist market) while at the same time preserving Chinese society (however adaptive to capitalism). Does China's increasing experience with Western ideas and increasing interdependence make the chance for compromise or dialogue relatively high? It is difficult to say how the PRC will deal with this "serious contradiction" moving forward.³⁴¹ The durability, and resurgence of traditional ideas in Chinese society is demonstrative of the fact that it remains hierarchical with a focus on the collective.³⁴²

Chinese pragmatism and the dampening of communist ideology reveals a system where responses to development issues are not entirely framed

³⁴⁰ Gamer, *Understanding Contemporary China*, 6.

³⁴¹ Lao, *Antiforeignism and Modernization*, 247.

³⁴² Gamer, *Understanding Contemporary China*, 7.

along ideological lines. The contestation of ideology is not simply an attack against the West because of anti-Western sentiment, it is also an extension of the Chinese political system, where since the Deng era, the importance of ideology has diminished. It is also very much a product of China's rejuvenation of Confucian ideals where thinking on harmony, on adhering to the Golden Mean as a means of attaining stable long-term goals without confrontation is all important.³⁴³ The aggressive forwarding of political ideology is viewed as counter to these ideals, and thus it must be transcended.³⁴⁴

An understanding of the reemergence of Confucian cultural norms in Chinese foreign policy gives important indications as to future action. The move towards pragmatism, the promotion of prudent or soft use of power, and the avoidance of both ideology and the power politics of “hostile balancing or war” are important elements of reassurance to the global system as a whole.³⁴⁵ The cultural basis of China's foreign policy is significant as it is cultural values that lay out the use of power in a soft way.³⁴⁶ China's pursuit of mutual benefit in its development relations with sub-Saharan Africa does not just represent South-South strategic rhetoric, it also finds a basis in Confucian thinking emphasising the importance of treating other nations with kindness.³⁴⁷

The cultural perspective of Chinese foreign policy, supportive of diversity, represents a challenge to universalism and thus to the universality of democracy. Chinese society has been identified as having few democracy-supporting social structures.³⁴⁸ Domestic societal reality, with little support for democracy in China's social structures, is reflected in foreign and development policy, and represents a challenge to the hegemonic liberal democratic order.³⁴⁹ At the same time, China does not seek to impose political structures on others.

343 Chen, “The Practice of the Mean,” 83.

344 Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre*, 75.

345 Deng, “The New Hard Realities,” 64.

346 Chen, “The Practice of the Mean,” 83; Li, “Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature,” 8.

347 Chen, “The Practice of the Mean,” 87.

348 Gamer, *Understanding Contemporary China*, 7.

349 Ibid.

5.9 Differences in China's Aid Approach

Whether or not Chinese aid and investment can be separated is an important question due to the overlap between Chinese national and commercial interests coupled with a broad definition of what constitutes “aid”.³⁵⁰ The state-business approach of the Chinese government significantly broadens the role of the Chinese state in comparison with the European Union and other traditional donors. This willingness to “change old patterns” is in keeping with the Chinese pragmatic tradition.³⁵¹ Indeed, this is represented domestically as the PRC selectively implements neoliberal reforms, while maintaining a strong developmental state, ignoring the hegemonic norm. This is surely part of China’s attractiveness as a partner and as an example of a developmental state for African nations to follow. It is clear that the PRC does not want to be bound by convention arbitrarily, this of course would affect policy options and run against the pragmatic approach to policy in general. Where China is bound by international agreements, such as its signing of the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, they have used their own interpretation in measuring success and compliance.³⁵²

Returning to the process of Chinese aid, in instances where there is Chinese financing for aid projects, the proposals come first from the potential recipient government.³⁵³ This is a reaffirmation of the sovereignty of China’s bilateral partners, as well as ensuring that China is perceived as an equal partner, as opposed to a soft imperialist partner. This, along with absence of political conditionalities or rhetoric concerning the internal politics of African partners, appeals to African elites, such as Rwandan President Paul Kagame, who feel that the West has no right in suggesting that African trade with China will inherently damage prospects for democracy, as the US and EU themselves engage

350 Berger and Wissenbach, *EU-China-Africa trilateral development cooperation*, 17.

351 Bräutigam, *Chinese aid and African development*, 28.

352 Jean-Raphaël Chaponniere, “Chinese aid to Africa, origins, forms and issues,” in *New Presence of China in Africa*, ed. Meine Pieter van Dijk (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press - EADI, 2009), 70-71.

353 Davies, “How China delivers development assistance to Africa,” 8.

in heavy trade with the PRC without facing such criticisms.³⁵⁴ This is coupled with Chinese statements on the right of nations to develop distinct social and political systems. Such rhetoric is also found in joint African-Chinese statements in the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.³⁵⁵ All of this links to reaffirming the supremacy of the state, which is central to Chinese foreign and development policies. This resonates with Third World political elites, as sovereignty and non-intervention continue to be relevant issues in the global South.³⁵⁶

The Chinese approach also promotes an older understanding of the development trajectory where state capacity comes as a consequence of development, not the other way around.³⁵⁷ Fundamental to this is the distinction between an economic and social rights perspective and a political and civil rights perspective. It is quite clear that good governance initiatives are meant to promote the latter, and that the neoliberal approach to development actually damage the former.

China's approach is inherently pragmatic as it includes virtual money transfer (transfer of funds directly to the Chinese contractor as opposed to through the African government) in the instance of aid projects, leaving little chance for corruption.³⁵⁸ This demonstrates that despite the fact that there is an absence of political conditionalities and a lower level of transparency in China's aid to Africa, there is still an interest in aid effectiveness.

5.10 China's Alternative Order

Ultimately to see the impact that China is having on EU (hegemonic) development objectives in sub-Saharan Africa, the question to address is whether or not there is a shift happening in development discourse with China's increasing involvement in sub-Saharan Africa. In social

354 Paul Kagame, "Why Africa welcomes the Chinese," *The Guardian* (London, November 2, 2009), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/nov/02/aid-trade-rwanda-china-west>.

355 See Page 74.

356 Acharya and Buzan, "Why is there no non-Western IR theory?," 18.

357 See footnote 284, page 82.

358 Davies, "How China delivers development assistance to Africa," 19.

constructivist terms, this question would be whether or not China is promoting an alternative systemic culture surrounding development. As the contemporary development discourse has been directly linked to the hegemonic global order, an alternative systemic culture in development would also represent a challenge to the broader neoliberal and liberal democratic order.

If China is promoting a discursive shift in development it is certainly to move towards Third Worldist principles of non-interference and mutual respect. China does not actively promote its own development model, nonetheless the so-called Beijing Consensus has become central to the discourse around China's involvement in sub-Saharan Africa. This is where a: "liberal market economy exists under an authoritarian political system."³⁵⁹ Though it may also refer simply to selective application of the neoliberal model.³⁶⁰ The important part is that political and economic systems should reflect a nation's specific needs and not a universal conception of the nation-state.

China's foreign policy continues to be infused with ideas surrounding anti-hegemony. As has also been extensively discussed, Confucian thought advocates for balance, and respect for diversity, something that counters the kind of universalist ideology propagated by the presently hegemonic West (the EU included). Thus, as China seeks to regain its status as a "benevolent great power", compromising on the anti-hegemonic stance would be of little benefit.³⁶¹ China also has an anti-hegemonic foreign policy due to domestic concerns regarding the sovereignty of the PRC. These include the issues of Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang. The negative historical experience with colonialism, and subsequent psychological burden of humiliation also strengthen's China's anti-hegemonic position. China's historical anxieties regarding interference of hegemonic powers in internal affairs are also felt to be a present issue especially given American involvement in East Asia, including support for Taiwan.³⁶² These issues make it difficult to imagine

359 Kagan (2006) qtd. in Li, "Soft Power: Nurture Not Nature," 2-3.

360 Zhao, "Prospect of China's Soft Power," 257.

361 Medeiros, *China's International Behavior*, 8.

362 Lao, *Antiforeignism and Modernization*, 262.

China making major changes in its foreign policy that would reflect the concerns of the hegemonic development discourse, as their approach to development is reflective of universalism, which runs in direct opposition to Chinese cultural particularism, as well as policies of non-interference and mutual respect.

It is the search for strategic partners that underlay the historical importance of African nations both in the People's Republic of China's accession to the United Nations and in its search for international allies in light of international condemnation of China's human rights record after the Tiananmen incident of 1989. In return, China has in principle defended the sovereign rights of African partners, though there are exceptions where China's international image is at stake, such as in eventual Chinese support for peacekeepers in Darfur.³⁶³ China has become increasingly aware of the effect of its development cooperation with certain regimes on its international image.³⁶⁴

The discourse within the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation coming from China has explicitly stated the aim of achieving: "the emergence of a just and equitable new political and economic order by fostering unity among developing countries."³⁶⁵ Within the Forum, statements from African leaders rarely denounce the Western order, though they do emphasise the positive nature of China's involvement in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and thus the existence of an alternative systemic culture can be explained through Wendt's collective identity formation concept explained in the theory chapter.³⁶⁶ The foundation of interaction is of course self-restraint, which is of course demonstrated through principles of non-interference and mutual respect. These are not only central to Chinese foreign policy but have been important concepts in the Third World including the Non-Aligned

363 Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Andrew Small, "China's New Dictatorship Diplomacy: Is Beijing Parting With Pariahs?" *Foreign Policy*, February 2008, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63045/stephanie-kleine-ahlbrandt-and-andrew-small/chinas-new-dictatorship-diplomacy>.

364 Ibid.

365 Alden and Alves, "China and Africa's Natural Resources," 8.

366 Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 318, 353.

Movement, which represents an association with a previously existing systemic culture. Economic interdependence is the most obvious factor that binds FOCAC together, with reciprocal (though not necessarily even) benefits for both sides. It can be argued that there is political interdependence as well, including support at the United Nations, and support for right to choose political and economic systems for development. This also points somehow to a form of homogeneity, as it is in the interest of all parties to have policy space, and for China particularly to have the right to a legitimate political system without adhering to the political norms of the hegemonic global order.

As was stated in the theoretical section, it is possible for systemic cultures to be renegotiated. China's alternative culture represents an alternative. China's impact is perhaps already visible due to softening in World Bank and EU approaches moving forward. The EU is looking to shift away from conditional aid towards the provision of political and financial incentives for meeting good governance standards.³⁶⁷ Also, Justin Yifu Lin, Chief Economist of the World Bank has conceded that governance is likely directly linked to "state of economic development."³⁶⁸ These kinds of changes from the orthodoxy of the hegemonic development discourse are minor, though they may be an indication that the presence of China is forcing European and Western institutions to soften their position on conditionalities.

China's more explicit opposition to the global order in the context of African development may have to do with the fact that on the continent, there is less of a need for assurance that other nations do not need to balance against China.³⁶⁹

China's position does weaken European soft imperialism in Africa, as it gives an alternative option to sub-Saharan African countries, thus opening up policy space for development strategies outside of the

367 Berger and Wissenbach, *EU-China-Africa trilateral development cooperation*, 10.

368 Justin Yifu Lin, "Six Steps for Strategic Government Intervention," *Global Policy* 1, no. 3 (October 2010): 330.

369 Joshua Kurlantzick, "China's Soft Power in Africa," in *Soft power : China's emerging strategy in international politics*, ed. Mingjiang Li (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009), 167.

traditional donor box.³⁷⁰ China's rejection of political conditionalities and explicit pursuit of alternative development and an alternative international political and economic order certainly challenges EU normative interests. China's position does not appear as though it will converge with that of the EU. This is due to that fact that Chinese discursive legitimacy relies on its opposition to the hegemonic global order and the interconnected development discourse. As discussed, China has earned its anti-hegemonic credentials through development assistance in sub-Saharan Africa dating back to the 1950s. It would be naïve to think that China would adopt the Western approach to development as a universalist approach which is contrary to Chinese cultural perspectives, historical experience with colonisation and their important position in South-South relations. Despite the strength of China's position, the commitment of the PRC to a peaceful rise and promoting harmony in the global system, conscious of their own image as a benevolent great power, there is still great potential for softening of China's discourse, and for dialogue with the traditional donors, and the EU in particular.

5.11 Application of Constrained Relativism

If we admit for the importance of culture in the construction of development policy and the assertion of foreign policy, then it is possible to imagine how mutual understanding can be forged by relative cultural compatibility. The example given in the theoretical chapter was of EU culture being more individualistic therefore having less mutual accountability, while China's culture is more communalistic, thus there is more mutual accountability.³⁷¹ These are representative of two cultures with divergent forms of social solidarity. According to the theory of constrained relativism, Chinese culture could be termed as hierarchical, where social accountability exists with fettered competition, while (the neoliberal model of European culture) is characterised by extreme individualism, thus social unaccountability and unfettered competition

370 Huse and Muyakwa, "China in Africa: lending, policy space and governance."

371 Zhao, "Prospect of China's Soft Power," 261.

are promoted.³⁷²

As far as compatibility is concerned, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to address the (rather challenging) question of African culture, especially as it relates to international relations. However, mindful of African communalism, an interesting question is whether or not similar Chinese social solidarities regarding accountability would make China a stronger partner for Africa in terms of mutual trust and understanding. Gyekye argues that African cultures are predisposed towards communalism and accountability. This includes the concept of ubuntu—"a person is a person through persons"—, which Shutte argues "is common to all African languages and traditional cultures."³⁷³ This provides a very interesting question for future research.

5.12 African Prospects

An important question for future research is what kind of changes in political and economic development will occur in sub-Saharan Africa as a result of China's great increase in involvement since the late 1990s. As China's development discourse and approach challenges the dominance of the Western conception of development, greater policy space will be opened up. How this policy space might change African politics in light of increased independence from the hegemonic global is an intriguing prospect.

China's presence creates many economic opportunities for African countries including getting out of colonial trade structure.³⁷⁴ The PRC is investing in areas, such as infrastructure, that were long abandoned by the traditional donors.³⁷⁵ From the perspective of African political elites, Chinese involvement creates leverage as development assistance comes from an increasing number of partners. A major part of this leverage is the fact that China's key perspectives on development cooperation

372 Thompson, Verweij, and Ellis, "Why and How Culture Matters."

373 Shutte (1993) qtd. in James E. Lassiter, "African Culture And Personality: Bad Social Science, Effective Social Activism, Or A Call To Reinvent Ethnology?," *African Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (1999): 3, <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v3/v3i3a1.htm>.

374 Carmody and Owusu, "Competing Hegemons?," 2.

375 Davies, "How China delivers development assistance to Africa," 52.

including non-interference, mutual respect, and thus the ability to choose models appropriate for developmental needs are divergent from those of the hegemonic development discourse. Thus, the opportunity is also for greater policy space, and arguably policy independence for sub-Saharan African nations to chart their development with minimised external influence/coercion.

The increased policy space perhaps provides for the possibility for opening of political space for a process similar to Foucault's genealogy, finding forms of the body politic that have been suppressed by the colonial and nation states. Otherwise, it is possible to imagine new political conceptions, equally owned locally and attached to local culture as opposed to being outside impositions.

The leverage gained has great potential for sub-Saharan Africa, especially as this new negotiating power, along with the opportunities for development, Africa stands to have a stronger politico-economic position in the global system.³⁷⁶ “South-South cooperation has become a viable feature of globalisation where Africans are treated as equal business partners and not belittled in their self-esteem as recipients of charitable donations from the industrialised world.”³⁷⁷ Indeed, China treats Africa as an opportunity, not as a burden.³⁷⁸

While from the perspective of political elites, China's approach to development is attractive, the perspective of African civil society is different. This is especially due to the fact that the existence of a “vibrant civil society” does not find itself in China's definition of development.³⁷⁹ African civil society grows increasingly concerned, especially with issues such as lack of transparency involved with Chinese aid, as well as labour conditions in Chinese development projects.

Despite concerns from civil society, from an economic perspective, China has demonstrated the possibility for pragmatic, state-led development within the global capitalist system. Given the negative

376 Taylor, “The ‘all-weather friend?’”.

377 Berger and Wissenbach, *EU-China-Africa trilateral development cooperation*, 11.

378 Deborah Bräutigam, *The dragon's gift : the real story of China in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 70.

379 Linda Lönnqvist, “China's Aid to Africa: Implications for civil society” (International NGO Training and Research Centre, 2008), 8.

history with neoliberal reforms, the support of China and its domestic development example will create optimism for alternatives to neoliberal capitalism in African development.

It will remain to be seen is whether or not African political elites can develop national or regional politico-economic strategies that can forward own development approaches, while at the same time mitigating the risks of over-dependence on China.³⁸⁰ Only time will tell whether these opportunities for a new direction, and indeed a new discourse on development, can be achieved.

5.13 Conclusion

The European Union's approach to development is focussed on the export of universalist norms in an uneven way that is exemplary of soft imperialism. The norms imposed through political conditionalities include neoliberal economic reform, which is supported on the political side by institutional restructuring in the form of good governance. Though the discursive emphasis of good governance is on democracy and human rights, its main function is to create the institutional (governmental) basis for the implementation of neoliberal economic reforms including opening the market, reducing government role in the market especially through privatisation and promoting free trade. This approach is in contrast to the historical development patterns of any of the traditional donors in the region, which involved protectionist measures, and government intervention in the economy.³⁸¹

The European Union is part of the hegemonic development discourse, which contains within it the most important political advocacy for the hegemonic world order. That is to say, that the political programme of that order, driven by the West, is itself intertwined with their governmental and thus aid approaches to development. This is not

³⁸⁰ Davies, "How China delivers development assistance to Africa," 58-62.

³⁸¹ Chang, *Kicking away the ladder*.

This is contrasted, as noted in the discussion, with the temporality of Chinese development. As a country immediately confronted with there is perhaps a greater understanding of the needs of developing nations.

coincidental, as domestic political priorities inform external development policy.³⁸²

China has emerged over the past fifteen years as an increasing alternative to the liberal democratic and neoliberal development approach of the traditional donors and International Financial Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. China's approach to development externally differs from that of the West, as previously discussed stark cultural and historical differences inform the PRC's non-interference and mutual respect policies. It has been charged in the West that China's foreign policy is simply contrarian; this is an extreme simplification.³⁸³ The mixture of pragmatism, seeking for balanced social relations, combined with historical learning from the colonial mistakes of the West and an understanding of the humiliation that comes with being the victim of colonialism, has reinforced the strength of China's unwillingness to subvert other nations. This is part of an intricate and calculated pursuit of long-term interests not only economic but also including peace and harmony with other countries. It must be stressed that the latter goals are not altruistic in nature; a stable situation is understood to be necessary for maintaining China's emerging position as a global power, while the maintenance of stability also assures that the chance of confrontation and rivalry with other powers is kept to a minimum.

Inasmuch as China's development discourse in Africa refuses to adhere to the approach of traditional powers, it represents an alternative systemic culture to the present global order. Indeed, in statements within the Forum on China Africa Cooperation, there has been an explicit emphasis on pursuing a new economic and political order. The challenge posed, however, is not entirely ideological. While the hegemonic global order's policies are framed by neoliberal economic and liberal democratic political ideology, especially triumphalist since the end of the Cold War; China's approach is more reflective of pragmatism rooted in Confucianism. China's approach does not seek the homogenisation of states as the Soviet communist and Western liberal democratic ideologies

³⁸² Lancaster, *Foreign Aid*.

³⁸³ "US embassy cables: African countries prefer Chinese aid to US-China cooperation."

have. Instead, the approach explicitly seeks the acceptance of diversity of social and political systems, with differing approaches to development, political and economic structures, and human rights. Though this approach is not purely ideological in nature, it does challenge the supremacy of liberal democracy as the basis of legitimacy for nation states in the global system. China's own state capitalism, increasingly influencing African political elites, also challenges the supremacy of neoliberal economic doctrine, another pillar of the Western-driven hegemonic global order. The extent of China's challenge to the hegemonic order will depend on its pragmatism and on its interdependency with both Africa and the EU and the West generally.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

This thesis has identified contrasts in EU and Chinese development policy that inform their mutual interaction, as well as the impact their discursive interplay has, especially on policy options in sub-Saharan Africa. This conclusion reviews the findings of the thesis in terms of this interplay between EU and Chinese policies in development in the areas of domestic policies and culture, which ultimately inform the construction of development policy, that form systemic cultures at the highest level internationally. This conclusion is organised according to the contextual aspects that come into play when analysing emerging development actors versus traditional ones; namely: domestic politics, culture and systemic culture. Throughout this section possible directions for future research are also noted.

The importance of **domestic politics** influencing the construction of external development policy has been emphasised throughout the thesis. The European Union is a unique political formation, as a union of liberal democratic nations with interlinking economic, political, legal and social institutions. The European approach to governance, which has an important bearing on development-thinking, emphasises the rule of law (and the safeguarding of individual political and civil rights), and implementation through standardised models. This is reflective of European cultural universalism.

The People's Republic of China is the world's preeminent non-democratic power, with an authoritarian political system run by the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese approach to governance is informed by a cultural disposition towards pragmatism, with implementation of projects decentralised, and generally adaptable to local conditions. With an emphasis on the collective, projects are often undertaken before a legal framework exists, thus enhancing the statist ability to experiment with various methods, and to innovate, while

potentially hampering the rights of individuals. This approach is somehow tolerated due to an emphasis on the economic and social rights of the collective as opposed to individuals (though this is of course not always the case).

The form of governance of each actor is important in several ways. Firstly, it is reflected in development policy as the European approach is characterised more by the implementation of universal models while China's approach to development is not to export China's model, and instead to promote adaptability diverse local contexts. Secondly, governance forms part of the internal political model of each respective actor. As noted in the theoretical chapter, this forms a part of the attractiveness of each actor, a component of soft power.

The emphasis of European governance on civil and political rights is appealing to African civil society, as liberal democracy enhances public accountability. On the other hand, the attractiveness of Europe's model for African political elites lies more closely to the legitimacy associated with it, as opposed to its functionality. In reality, given the politico-economic development challenges of many sub-Saharan African countries, and the history of inadequacy of Western-style reforms, the Chinese approach, especially with the ability for innovation, must be more attractive from a developmental statist perspective. Jacob Zuma's comments cited in the previous chapter on whether African countries should adopt Chinese political structures to improve the development process support this perspective.

Another domestic factor that impacts the approach to development is the self-perceived level of development of each actor. Europe's approach to development could be viewed as inappropriate due to the fact that, at Europe's level of development, different challenges are faced. Europe's approach to development policy is in keeping with the emphasis on good governance and neoliberal economic reform occurring internally.³⁸⁴ But as mentioned in the discussion, the EU, and

³⁸⁴ It should be noted that the reform advocated externally is much more extreme than that advocated internally.

the hegemonic development discourse as a whole, have a false self-perception of how development is achieved, ignoring the fact that statist (protectionist) approaches were originally used to develop European national economies.

On the other hand, China considers itself to be a developing country, a fact that reinforces its prominence in the developing world. While China has a more advanced economy than almost all of its sub-Saharan African partners, China's development process has occurred rapidly over the last three decades. Underdevelopment was recent in China, indeed many parts of China still face major development challenges. Thus, China's experience with the development process is much more current than that of Europe. Combine this temporality with the pragmatic, state-led approach China takes toward development projects and it becomes clear that China is a much more attractive partner for economic development in sub-Saharan Africa. While Europe emphasises reforms under the assumption of state capacity that does not necessarily exist, China's approach is compatible with the understanding that state capacity comes as a consequence of development, it is not always feasibly a prerequisite.³⁸⁵

This thesis has emphasised how domestic politico-economic changes are reflected in development policy. The trajectory of EU can be seen from a focus on economic development through trade agreements with the ACP countries under the Lomé Convention to the increasing politicisation of EU development policy through the Cotonou Agreement. These agreements reflect an evolution from the economically-focussed EEC to the increasing political powers of the European Union.

Chinese development assistance to Africa began as a revolutionary effort, to assist in independence struggles and anti-hegemonic development, while at the same time emphasising Maoist communist ideology. This approach has slowly shifted towards pragmatic development policy, in the sense of strategic political partnership, mostly

385 See footnote 284, page 82.

focused on the safeguarding of Chinese domestic priorities. China's domestic priorities are not only economic; political concerns over sovereignty, along with historical humiliation by colonial powers and a cultural disposition towards diversity, means that anti-hegemony remains central in Chinese foreign policy.

Ultimately, with the counterpoint of greater Chinese pragmatism and the politicisation of European development policy, a key trend to observe in the coming years will be whether or not a greater Chinese presence in Africa will soften European insistence on political conditionalities, for instance. Signs are that this is beginning to happen, with an EU shift towards incentive based rewards for development partners, though the incentives are still based on good governance and neoliberal economics. China is certainly part of this policy-change; the extent to which China is a factor should be a subject for further research.

The next factor, **culture**, as a major component of domestic politics often ignored in political analysis, has been used as a lens throughout the thesis as essential to understanding the development discourses of both the European Union and the People's Republic of China. A major point of divergence between the two actors' approaches is the counterpoint of European cultural universalism and Chinese cultural particularism. These distinctions underlie their respective systemic cultures, and their approaches to aid. They have also affected important concepts for the influence of both actors in sub-Saharan Africa, namely soft power. Culture also has an important impact on the construction of interests.

The conceptions of soft power for both actors differ. A big influence on this is the cultural worldview. European soft power relies on Europe's normative power, which entails the spread of treasured European political norms as a mission and legitimating force. This is an expression of European cultural universalism (also encompassing 'Eurocentric diffusionism' and Eurocentric developmentalism'). The ultimate goal, from this perspective, is the attainment of a homogenous global order, comprised of liberal democratic nation states.

China's approach to soft power, outlined with Li Mingjiang's soft use of power approach, is infused with culturally specific notions regarding balance in relations, mutually favourable agreements, overall benevolence and respect for diversity. These are means of establishing harmony and thus stability in the international system. China's respect for diversity corresponds with China's own cultural particularism. An important point for future research is the appeal of diversity due to African cultural aspirations.

The counterpoint of European cultural universalism and Chinese cultural particularism is a very important one in the context of relations with Africa. European imposition of political norms reminds of the colonial era, though at the same time broad African desire for democracy should be recognised.³⁸⁶ However, it is important to differentiate between the democratic ideal and the Western imposition of the liberal democratic model of the nation-state along with a neoliberal economy. The latter imposition has restricted the policy space of African governments, diminishing their ability to pursue politico-economic development policies regardless of their adherence to the hegemonic development discourse. This is the paradox of European soft power, while it may ideally be attractive, the imposition of political conditionalities and the failure of Western-style reforms has certainly diminished the attractiveness of the EU as a development partner. Chinese soft power has strength in the simplicity of non-interference and mutual respect, while having more intricate cultural perspectives on soft power that, if followed, make China an attractive partner.

The construction of interests is an important aspect when thinking of the present and future viability of Chinese and European development relationships with sub-Saharan Africa. This is in light of accusations that the Chinese are simply self-interested, and are pushing for a new kind of colonisation of Africa.³⁸⁷ Not only does this idea of Chinese colonisation run against Chinese policies of non-interference and mutual respect as

386 Michael Bratton, E. Gyimah-Boadi, and Robert Mattes, *Compilation of Afrobarometer Round I Survey in 12 Countries: Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, 1999-2001* (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, May 23, 2005).

387 Sautman and Hairong, "China-in-Africa Discourse."

well as the strategic importance of African nations as political partners; this view oversimplifies China's set of interests based on the assumption of rational choice.

A focus on short-term, individual interest that is the core of rational choice theory, is a Eurocentric assumption which is thus more applicable to the EU as an actor. Chinese interests have been demonstrated to be longer-term in nature, while the collectivist nature of Chinese society promotes mutual accountability, thus making interests more complex. The focus on confidence-building, the maintenance of long-term relationships (in the form of *guanxi*) in Chinese culture extends to foreign policy, meaning that stable, long-term bilateral relations clearly fall within a Chinese construction of interests.

China's more complex set of interests may make them more competitive from the perspective of relationships. This, along with China's anti-hegemonic credentials which help its popularity among African political elites. Still, regarding anti-hegemony, China's historical relations with the sub-Saharan African country in particular would be an important factor.³⁸⁸

The thesis has argued for the existence of competing **systemic cultures** around development. The European Union forms part of the hegemonic development discourse containing the traditional donors and the international financial institutions while the other systemic culture consists of African nations and China (as a de facto leader) under the auspices of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

Each systemic culture is sustained by a discourse, and in this case both discourses are strong. European universalism means that the norms of the hegemonic development discourse and their legitimacy is very difficult to challenge, both from internal and external perspectives. From the Chinese perspective, cultural, historical and strategic positions that underlie China's leadership of a new systemic culture around

388 Meine Pieter Van Dijk, "Conclusions from China's activities in Africa," in *New Presence of China in Africa*, ed. Meine Pieter van Dijk (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press - EADI, 2009), 206.

development mean that their position is also inflexible.

Despite the stark differences in positions, the fact is that China's position is not politically invasive, nor does it promote an opposing ideological system that would directly dictate the domestic behaviour of the nations under its influence. China's pragmatism, pursuit of stability and desire for a peaceful rise along side the EU's soft power approach means that dialogue can exist. This is especially the case in the context of high EU-China economic interdependence. One difficulty concerning dialogue, however, is assuring that it equally includes African partners, as they still appear to have considerable influence on any attempt to have EU-China cooperation concerning development in Africa.

There are also key differences in the structure of the differing systemic cultures around development of which the EU and China are part. Europe's systemic culture, the hegemonic development discourse, pushes for homogeneity of the community of nations, promoting the adoption of liberal democratic political systems with neoliberal reformed markets. In the case of the European Union, the promotion and imposition of this universalist vision has been achieved through uneven relations, or soft imperialism.

The structure of the systemic culture revolving around the FOCAC is based on the political equality of members, with non-interference and mutual respect as forms of self-restraint. This systemic culture is first and foremost for reciprocal economic benefits, while also maintaining a certain form of homogeneity, in the stated desire of all members for the right of nations to have their own particular political, economic and social systems.

The emergence of FOCAC and China in Africa impacts the EU's position of soft imperialism as African nations are offered an alternative to European conditionalities and models that reaffirms, at least rhetorically, political, economic, and cultural sovereignty. With China-Africa relations strengthening year-by-year, and EU-China-Africa cooperation unsuccessful, African countries are gaining greater leverage with the EU, and the West as a whole. Indeed, this leverage demonstrates

the importance and attractiveness of China-Africa relations for sub-Saharan African political elites, giving a degree of choice (policy space) unseen since the end of the Cold War, and not containing the same kind of stark ideological differences that characterised the former capitalist-communist divide. The desire for African governments to maintain the leverage created by the Chinese presence was demonstrated in the discussion with quotations of South African and Kenyan government representatives who oppose EU-China cooperation as it may in some way weaken China's approach, thus weakening Africa's position.

The form of aid provision of each actor is also significant. European development assistance is politicised, and is within the traditional, hegemonic development paradigm. The liberal democratic, good governance and neoliberal reform approach to development emphasises the reduction of the state. The EU emphasises effectiveness of aid through conditionalities, though this is changing towards incentives still reflecting the normative priorities of the EU. In contrast, the Chinese approach to aid is first characterised by non-interference and mutual respect, the latter being reinforced by recipient ownership of development projects. That is to say that African governments have control over project proposals. These policies help to strengthen the supremacy of the state, while the effectiveness of the assistance is assured through virtual money transfer (for Chinese funded projects, directly to the contractor, so as to minimise corruption).

Ultimately, both China and the European Union are concerned with the effectiveness of their development assistance; so far allegations that Chinese involvement increases corruption are largely unfounded. As for which approach will be favoured moving forward, it is likely that the traditional development discourse and its emphasis on the reduction of the state will lose hegemony, much as its legitimacy has already been heavily criticised in sub-Saharan Africa.³⁸⁹ The emphasis China puts on the supremacy of the state, coupled with a developmental statist

389 Thandika Mkandawire and Charles C. Soludo, *Our Continent, Our Future: African Perspectives on Structural Adjustment* (Asmara: Africa World Press, 1999), 75.

approach to development, may be more favourable for the developmental needs of sub-Saharan Africa. At the very least, the policy space opened by the Chinese option, creates greater politico-economic autonomy so that African nations can pursue suitable approaches to development. Ultimately, developmental success of many sub-Saharan countries will rely on their ability to manage and balance their relations with both the EU and China in a constructive way, while assuring that increased investment, and potentially fewer conditionalities translate into appropriate development strategies for the future of sub-Saharan Africa.

In summary, the EU's soft imperialist position, imposed through development assistance, has been diminished by the presence of Chinese development policy in sub-Saharan Africa. Chinese culture promotes diversity and differs from European cultural universalism. The existence of the Chinese option increases policy space for African governments. Due to major cultural and historical differences, China is unlikely to adopt a political approach to development that converges with that of the EU. Nonetheless, due to Chinese pragmatism and the EU's soft power approach, as well as EU-China economic interdependence, political confrontation is highly unlikely and dialogue is possible.

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Appendix

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